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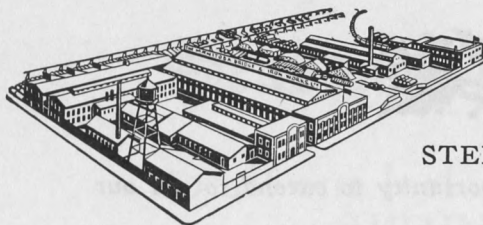
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The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 8

Winnipeg, Man., Winter 1949

No. 2

Our Icelandic Culture

ITS PRESERVATION IN THE WEST

By DR. THORKELL JOHANNESSON, Professor of History
at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik



Dr. Thorkell Johannesson

A friend of mine poses the question: What about our Icelandic culture* — its preservation in America?

It is a good rule to be cautious in

discussing subjects which one does not fully understand. I have been in this country for only about two months so it cannot be expected that I should have a comprehensive and thorough grasp of problems facing Vestur-Íslendingar**. It is true that during my brief stay here*** I have met many fine countrymen of mine, both men and women, who understand and speak the Icelandic language—some very well. Yet some of these people were born here in the West. All these people have disclosed a keen interest in Iceland and the well-being of the people there. Many of them would like to visit Iceland and it is to be hoped that their wishes will be fulfilled. They undoubtedly would profit by such visits. They are all good Icelanders though of course they are at the same time good Canadians and Americans. And I know very well that there are many whom I have not had an opportunity of meeting, who share these sentiments. Icelandic

* The author uses the compound word "þjóðræknismálið". There is no English equivalent. The article shows clearly what he has in mind: the problem of preserving as much as possible of things of value in our common Icelandic heritage. The connotation of the word "þjóðrækni", as it applies to us in the West of Icelandic descent, is far removed from what the words "nationalism" or "patriotism" convey. These words have been so much abused that they at times have a somewhat derogatory meaning. Be that as it may, at their best these words express the loyalty we feel towards Canada. What the author has in mind, and we share with him, is a loyalty to a distinctive culture at once ancient and modern. In the translation of the word, which in one compound or another appears several times in the article, phrases including the words "culture" or "heritage" will be used.

** A word commonly used in referring to people in North America of Icelandic extraction.

*** This article was written in Winnipeg a few days before the author returned to Iceland after having visited the main Icelandic settlements in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

culture and the problem of preserving it in America, is of great concern to these people. And it equally concerns us, Icelanders of the motherland. This problem is so important and far-reaching, that it does not behoove me or any other Icelander to pass it by. For that reason I cannot refuse to comply with a request that I discuss it briefly, even though the material at hand may be more limited than I would have preferred.

Our Icelandic culture is close to our hearts. It is a matter of sentiment and must be approached with caution and tolerance. But one must avoid constant praise and empty words of brass and cymbals. Here, as indeed at all times, the truth is the best and surest foundation. There may be some who wish to evade the facts and have tried to persuade themselves and others that they are not as they seem. In their ignorance they have reached totally different conclusions, largely because they have refused to delve into the essence of the causes that give rise to the problem.

My knowledge may be limited but I am of the opinion that it would be no misstatement to say that a large percentage of the people of Iceland are under the impression that their countrymen here in the West understand and speak the Icelandic language and follow public affairs in Iceland. They are Icelanders, it is thought, and that is something which will not change and is quite normal. It is not to be expected that people who cherish such ideas, should see a great need for encouragement and assistance in the preservation of our Icelandic heritage in America.

But suppose the situation were totally different. Let us face the facts. The Icelandic language is gradually disappearing in America. To a large extent it will go with the second generation

here, so much indeed, that the third generation will not be able to obtain a grasp of the language. There of course will be a number of exceptions but they only go to prove the general rule. This is a fact, a very natural and a quite inescapable fact. The causes are many; they are well known in the West and it is not necessary to enumerate them here.

What then? Isn't that the answer and does that not disclose the fate of our national heritage on this side of the ocean?

The language is only one of the chords of national sentiment. True, it is a most important and powerful one. Because of the situation here the language is the main and in fact the only key to the cultural heritage of the people of Icelandic stock; the key to the classic and modern literature of Iceland, that wealth of wisdom, that power of penetration and sharp reasoning, that deep philosophy and consummate skill which is to be found in the recorded language — something which those can share who sincerely seek to reach into this source of cultural wealth.

There is much inherent worth and value in being a good Icelander, to have the courage to acknowledge it and to be proud of it. That has stood many a one of our countrymen in good stead. It has given him a surer footing, reinforced his courage and his qualities of mind. But there is a danger that this pride of heritage may lose its vigor when people have lost the language, know very little about Iceland and matters Icelandic, have very little if any opportunity of acquiring the needed knowledge if they wished to do so. Their heritage may be reduced to a vague knowledge of the origin of their fathers which in turn will become blur-

red and obscure unless it is associated with something special which the individual thoroughly understands and is able to appreciate.

The problem of preserving our national heritage has now reached the stage that those who desire to offer assistance of any consequence must clearly bear in mind that each year the trend is in the direction I have indicated. When one views the present situation it is obvious that far-reaching changes lie ahead. New facts demand new methods of approach and those who seek to preserve our Icelandic culture here and are serving in that field either here or in the homeland, must take cognizance of that change and direct their thoughts and activities accordingly.

Some people—but I think they are very few—may perhaps take the stand that there is nothing to do, that this is a lost cause. Others, and they are in the majority, maintain that here is a real service to be rendered, extending far into the future. These people feel that even though the Icelandic language may to a large extent if not entirely, cease to be the spoken language of the home, there is a duty to perform in guarding and maintaining what is left—a duty which is perhaps the only bond that binds together our countrymen here in the West. I think they are right. For some time to come there certainly is a lot to do. In fact the more earnest and diligent the response to that call of duty the farther away will be the day when it can be said that further effort should cease as there is nothing to do.

I mentioned new paths, new methods of approach in the struggle for the preservation of our common heritage. What I particularly had in mind was the social and cultural activities among

the young people of the third and fourth generations and the proposed chair in Icelandic language and literature at the University in Winnipeg. I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the Icelandic Canadian Club to be able to discuss to what extent it is fulfilling its intended purpose. One thing is clear to me: if our Icelandic culture is to be perpetuated here it is essential to emphasize the need of inculcating in the minds of the young people a due regard for Iceland and a knowledge and appreciation of the distinctive culture of its people. In view of the actual facts I know this is a difficult task. The Icelandic people are scattered far and wide over the vast expanse of the North American continent. The inevitable result is that many are completely cut off from all association with their countrymen; and others, because they are so few in numbers and have such distances to cover, have very little choice and eventually meet the same fate. But there are cities and districts where Icelanders are to be found in considerable numbers, so that in spite of the constant fluctuations in population and migrations from one part of the country to another, our people will succeed for a long time in keeping together provided only that they are determined to do so.

It seems to me that the united effort which one sees here to preserve our common heritage, springs from such a deep-rooted sentiment in our countrymen that it will, if properly directed, continue for a long time to come. But then it becomes very important that the work among the young people be effectively performed. That phase of our cultural activities needs all the support it can get both here and in the homeland. I fear that support for this part

of the work has been unduly delayed and for that reason it is the more urgent that such support be given at once and in liberal measure. In this respect moving pictures of different types would serve a useful purpose; so also short articles and narratives on Icelandic subjects and affairs, ancient as well as modern. Good translations from classic and modern literature would be of inestimable value. In fact there is a dire need for such translations in the whole English-speaking world because most of what is now available is rather unsuitable and out of date. But what is most important of all is the personal influence of those who now are giving of their time in this service and others who will follow in their footsteps.

Now I come to the proposed chair in Icelandic at the University in Winnipeg. At this very time an enthusiastic and energetic Icelander, who is well versed in Icelandic learning, would be able to be of great assistance in the cultural work among our people here. There need be no doubt in the mind of any one of the value of having a man here who can devote his time to writing and public addresses, both in English and Icelandic, about Iceland and subjects pertaining to its people. This would be of benefit to both Icelanders and others. Norse and Germanic people have for a long time realized the value of Icelandic learning to themselves, their history, their language and their culture generally. The Anglo-Saxons were a little slower but during the last decades they have with increasing enthusiasm turned to this cultural wealth. To a lesser extent the same may be said of the United States, but

here in Canada hardly a start has been made.

It is my opinion that in the establishment of a Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature here, not only are our Icelandic cultural activities very definitely promoted, extended and made more far-reaching, strengthened and placed on a firm foundation, but at the same time a gap is filled in the educational system of the Canadian people. With the establishment of the chair and the opportunity it will provide for the advancement of Icelandic letters, Winnipeg will soon become the main centre of such studies. That is as it should be because it is here that an Icelandic community will endure the longest. In their devotion to this cause my countrymen in the West have aimed high and shown remarkable foresight.

It is true that one hears the opinion expressed that in the establishment of this chair a fitting monument is being erected for the Icelandic language on this side of the ocean. And, it is said, may it rest in peace. Such words would, indeed, be uttered with feelings of pain by those who hold that everything is lost once the language has disappeared or almost completely so. That is a mistake and misunderstanding. In no other way can it be better assured that all along there will be a number of people here who are able to speak the language. And in no other way is it possible to ensure that Iceland and Icelandic culture will become known and be justly appreciated in this country which now is the native land of so many and such richly gifted sons and daughters of Iceland.

—Translated by W. J. Lindal

A Childhood Christmas

Translated by CAROLINE GUNNARSON

This is a story of a childhood Christmas in Iceland related by an elderly man in the Christmas issue of "Lesbók Morgunblaðsins", 1948. In re-telling it Caroline has captured the charm of the original story which describes the wondrous anticipation of a child waiting for the miracle of Christmas. On reading it, many mature readers will relive the enchantment of a joyous family festivity experienced in Iceland or perhaps in a humble Canadian pioneer home. And younger readers will, we hope, take time to savour the simple joys of a past generation.--Ed.

It had stormed all during Advent and the snow piled up in great drifts around our house. — When there was a slight lull, we boys dashed outdoors and slid on our seats down the hard, high drifts south of the house. It was hard on our pants, Mamma and the hired girls scolded, but we had little time to listen to such admonitions.

Then came a thaw; the drifts shrank to almost nothing, and below them were ponds of icy water and half melted snow. Just before Christmas all this froze over. The little drifts were too slippery to climb but, the ponds became level sheets of ice that sparkled like mirrors. Now we had more fun than ever, sliding on our feet. We envied the boys who lived on the neighboring farm, for they were older and could skate.

The grown-up people were always warning us. The ice might not be as strong as it looked, they said, and then, too, we must be careful not to fall. But we were having fun and paid very little attention to these warnings. One day, as I slid smoothly to the spot where the ice met the snow, I fell right through, so that only my head and hands could be seen above the ice. I could not pull myself out of the hole, but how I could yell. Inga, one of the hired girls, heard me and came running out. She pulled me to the surface and chased me into the house. There she stripped off

my nether garments, polished me off briskly and ordered me to bed, telling me to stay there until my clothes dried. I was not too well satisfied with the judgment but, of course, could not go out minus my pants.

Our hired man, Gvendur, was sent to town to buy supplies for the Christmas celebration, and he was away for two days. It seemed a long time to me, although I knew that Gvendur was a champion walker.

While we children played outside during the day we stayed indoors in the evening. For although there was a grand moon one had to beware of the Christmas elves. They were everywhere these nights and full of mischief. We felt that the older people knew more about these little creatures than they cared to say. But we did understand that they visited every house and that children should watch their behavior during advent. Between ourselves we discussed the little elves, and wondered whether they would approach the house from the south road or the east road, and whether they had already visited any of the other farms. It was a wonderful thrill of fear and anticipation.

The day before Christmas Eve we knew the Christmas elves had to come if they were going to come at all. The one we expected that day was called Tom. Gvendur was due home from his shopping trip too, and we kept

watching for both of them. By twilight we didn't dare stay out any longer and went indoors.

There was much ado in the pantry. Mamma had some strange mixture in the churn, and she had spread a hard sheepskin on the pantry floor. Over the skin she had laid two long boards, side by side, and between them smaller pieces of wood with a long piece of candlewick on each. Mamma dipped the lengths of candlewick into the churn and placed them back on the pieces of wood, which she then laid between the boards again and let them drip, and now we could see that she had tallow in the churn. Mamma kept this up until she had stout sturdy candles, telling us that if we did not touch anything we could watch her, and it was a fascinating show. She made a three-light candle with one in the middle and one on each side. Then she made a five-light candle with one in the middle and a circle of four all around it. Every single soul would get a candle, Mamma said. The five light one was for Papa.

That evening Gvendur arrived with a huge sack on his back. We could not see what was in the sack, of course, and the curiosity nearly killed us. Gvendur confided, though, that there was a parcel for me in it from my old friend, Captain Sigurd, who never failed to send me a Christmas parcel. I found it hard to understand why I must wait all that night and all the following day for a parcel that already belonged to me, but Gvendur said he had promised Captain Sigurd that he would not give it to me until Christmas Eve, and one never broke promises.

Then I asked Gvendur whether Tom, the Christmas elf, had walked along the road with him. He said he was not sure, but he thought he had

seen one of the little fellows tripping toward the farmhouse at Bakki when he passed. Had he seen little Hans, I asked. Gvendur was not sure of that either. He had seen someone standing outside there in the dusk, but it might have been just the cat. Whoever it was, though, the elf had come pretty close to snatching him, but he did think he had managed to get away. This had me worried, Hans was such a nice kid to play with, and I prayed that the elf had not got him. I thought about it until I fell asleep in the bed beside Gvendur.

I rose early the next morning—at the end of that day would come Christmas Eve. The weather was glorious for outdoor games. But I had too many things to think about and couldn't settle down to play. Would Christmas really come? How soon would it come, and where would it come from? Were the Christmas elves hiding in the "baðstofa" already, and what was in the parcel from Sigurd? Would Papa light all the lights on his candle at once? Suddenly I was very hungry and ran in for a bite. I found my sister and told her I was hungry.

"You are not getting anything to eat right now," she told me. "We're too busy to bother with you."

I went to see Mamma. "Are we going to have dinner soon, Mamma?"

"I'm afraid you wouldn't have much appetite for dinner," Mamma said.

"Will we get some of the smoked mutton that you cooked yesterday for dinner," I asked hopefully.

"All you are going to get is some dried fish," Mamma answered.

That was a hard enough life, I felt, and told Mamma I was so hungry I could hardly stand it. So she gave me some flat bread and butter, pushed me

out of the pantry and told me to play until I was called.

What a blessing that the midwinter days are short. I managed to mope outside for the rest of the day, except for a minute, when I dashed into the kitchen to see if all was well with my Inga. She was baking small thick griddle cakes and gave me one. I bit into it so greedily that it burned my tongue. The second bite was cooler, and I took time to find two raisins in it. At the gathering of dusk Inga came out and called me.

"Is Christmas here, Inga dear?" I asked her.

"Not yet," she answered, "but you have to get washed so you'll be ready to greet Christmas when it comes."

In the "baðstofa" Mamma had a huge tub of warm water, and the cleansing started.

"Christmas won't come if you cry when the soap gets in your eyes," Mamma told me when she started to wash my hair. How I tried to be good! But soap hurts, if it gets in a little boy's eyes, yet I certainly didn't scream. — After Mamma rinsed out my eyes and had all of me in the tub, I asked her if she thought Christmas would come since I had cried a little. She said she believed it would, because I was not very big and had really tried to be brave.

Then Mamma dressed me in clean underwear and a new shirt that was made exactly like Papa's. Such a shirt I had never owned before. Next she gave me new woolen socks, and Inga brought me a pair of brand new black sheepskin shoes, bound with soft white leather with woolen insoles, hand knit in a beautiful rose design. Inga said she wanted a kiss for the shoes. That was not hard, much as I loved her, and I gave her two smacking good ones.

Then Mamma brought out my new suit of blue homespun with reddish brown flecks. It was hand-sewn by Aunt Anna, and had shining gold buttons. When I was dressed Mamma combed my hair, said I was a nice boy, and asked me to try to keep my clothes clean.

My sister Asta, who was seven years older than I, appeared in a new dress of violet blue cloth, looking very lady-like.

Everybody was cleaning up and dressing up. Gvendur had his face covered with soap suds and scraped them off with a knife. I knew it was very sore by the faces he made, and if Gvendur weren't the man he was, I was sure he would be screaming.

I began to worry because everybody was fussing but Inga. She told me she had to go to the stable to milk the cows before getting dressed. That reminded me of the cows. Did they get any Christmas treat, I asked Inga. Well, she rather thought so. The cows were never forgotten at Christmas, and if she knew Gvendur he had not chosen of the worst for their Yuletide feed.

By this time I could no longer sit still on my bed, as Mamma had told me. Everything was going so slowly. They were all rushing busily around, but nothing seemed to move, and Christmas wasn't coming any closer. I caught my cat as she tried to pass and played with her for a while, but when I pulled her tail ever so gently she scratched my hand and dashed like lightning across the room. I went to the kitchen where Mamma was baking large tissue thin pancakes; told her that the cat was mad at me and asked for a pancake to pacify her. It tasted so good that when I couldn't find the cat I asked Mamma if I could eat it myself, and she laughingly gave her permission.

Oh, our peaceful, fragrantly clean baðstofa! While I was in the kitchen two candles and all the oil lamps had been lit. Everybody was sitting there, even Mamma and Inga.

Papa took two books from the book shelf and read a beautiful story about the first Christmas. I saw the Christ Child in the manger and all the glory and light on the plains of Bethlehem. I could even hear the angels sing "Glory to God in the Highest; Peace on Earth, Good Will unto Men!" Then all the people in the "baðstofa" started to sing the Christmas hymn, and I thought my sister's voice was so sweet that she should have been an angel.

But ah, I pitied the poor little Christ Child out there in the cold, dark stable. I would certainly not like to think of my brother out in the lamb shed, even if Mamma were in the manger with him and held him close. Big as I was I would not like to sleep out there myself, even if Papa would consent to sleep with me.

Finally the long hymn was over, and Papa wished everybody Happy Christmas. They all thanked him for the reading and wished him and each other Happy Christmas.

Now Inga and my sister carried in heaping plates of smoked mutton and all sorts of delicacies. There were piles of hard thin cakes, delicately patterned like filigree, and a huge candle for each person.

Suddenly I remembered. I had to look into something, and left my food to find out whether Papa had received his five-light candle. My sister, who was carrying in two plates full of food did not see me in the long dark corridor and fell over my feet. The food scattered all over the floor and she lost her temper with it. What, she wanted to know, was I doing in the dark cor-

ridor like a spook. I went on my way placidly, and in the pantry discovered from Mamma, not only that Papa had been given his five-light candle, but that I was to get the three-light one. Back in the "baðstofa" Gvendur gave me the parcel from Captain Sigurd, and in it was a pack of cards and lots and lots of figs.

Soon everyone lit a Christmas candle, and I was sure that our old "baðstofa" was as gloriously bright as the plains of Bethlehem the night that the Christ Child was born. After a while Mamma carried in rich hot chocolate and coffee, with plates full of doughnuts, Christmas cake and the tissue thin pancakes she had baked. Then Papa took his beautiful glass flask from the shelf and gave all the men a drop of something in their coffee. I thought this seemed to make them extra happy and even nicer than usual.

Before I knew everybody was playing games and the whole house was full of life and gaiety. We played forfeits, the girls giggling giddily when the boys had to stand on their heads, but making an awful fuss when they had to kiss one of them. They never refused, though, because that was not done in a game of forfeits. Anyway, I don't think they minded. Certainly Inga only had to kiss Gvendur once. Yet she kissed him twice and told him he had made a good job of shaving!

Siggi, the shepherd boy, suggested a game of cards. But Papa said sternly that cards were not to be touched on the holy Christmas Eve. He said that Siggi could play cards any other night, and all the nights between Christmas and New Years if he wished. Didn't Siggi know that when cards were played on Christmas Eve an extra King of Diamonds soon showed up in the deck, and one of them was the evil one him-

self. Siggi was very shamefaced and humbled at having mentioned such an outrage.

Somehow I became weak and weary as the evening wore on. I sat on the bed beside Papa and told myself that I was not sleepy, but something had happened to my eyelids. They kept falling down over my eyes and would not stay up. Of course I was not sleepy. Nobody could sleep away this wonderful Christmas Eve. I would just lean backwards for a moment and then return to the fun that was all around me.

Oh, what a sweet sense of well being there beside Papa on the bed. Suddenly I was gazing in wonder at the beautiful Christ Child in the manger, and

then I stood on the plains of Bethlehem. They were covered with golden dandelions and buttercups like our homefield, and the summer sun shone warmly. "Glory to God in the Highest," sang the angels.

All this happened 65 years ago, and I am now an old man. I have celebrated many Christmases, most of them in a much more elaborate manner than this first one that I remember. But never have I known such deep, inner happiness or been so richly blessed with the joyous Christmas spirit. I have placed the memory on record, that it may become the possession of my grandchildren.

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Winner of Bursary

Annually the Board of Trade of Vancouver, B. C., sponsors an Essay Contest on Job Studies, and prizes are awarded for the best essays. This contest is open to students of Vancouver schools. These prizes were awarded at a dinner at the Hotel Vancouver, the principal speaker was the Minister of Education, Mr. W. T. Straith. One of the 19 winners of this Bursary was **Daniel Haralds**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Einar Haralds, of Vancouver, B.C., formerly of Winnipeg.

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"America In The Making"

By VALDIMAR BJORNSON



LEIFUR EIRIKSSON ON HIS WAY TO AMERICA

Reproduction of a painting by the late Dr. August Blondal

(Editor's Note—This article is an adaptation of three broadcasts in a series called "America in the Making", begun in the fall of 1948 over WCAL, the radio station operated by St. Olaf College at Northfield, Minnesota, with studios there and in Minneapolis. Dean J. Jorgen Thompson chose to begin the series at the "top of the map", with Iceland, successive broadcasts later presenting the contributions of other immigrant groups to American life. He invited Valdimar Bjornson, honorary vice consul for Iceland in Minnesota, associate editor the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press and a radio commentator in the Twin Cities since 1935, to open the series. Mr. Bjornson in addition to other radio work, had given daily broadcasts of Scandinavian news over WCAL from 1940 to 1942, when he entered military service. He was in the U.S. Navy, stationed in Iceland for four years. For nearly three years of that time he was attached to Army headquarters, largely as a liaison officer dealing with the press and with Icelandic officials. During the last 14 months of his Iceland assignment, he was attached to the U.S. Legation in Reykjavik, sharing some of the re-

sponsibilities connected with final troop withdrawal and following closely the negotiations leading to the Keflavik airport agreement reached between the United States and Iceland. An additional assignment in the early period of his stay there was that of delivering "indoctrination lectures" concerning Iceland before American, British and Canadian troops. He entered the service as a Lieutenant (junior grade) and was a Lieutenant Commander on his discharge in December, 1946).

THE VIKING VOYAGERS

Iceland's early link with America comes long before the birth of Leif the Lucky, son of Erik the Red, at Eiríksstaðir in Haukadalur in Dalasýsla, in southwest Iceland—a few miles, by the way, from where my own mother was born. One goes back to Norway to trace these ties. And I'd like to interject at this point that there is just one thing I

hope may be gained through the next few minutes of this broadcast—and that is to eliminate doubts, if any there be, in the mind of any listener anywhere, about the historic validity of Leif Erikson's discovery of America in the year 1000. It isn't just something to be treated with an indulgent smile—a shrugging, "Oh, yes, those Scandinavians again—swelling their chests about some fanciful claim that historians have never accepted fully."

Despite all the space that grade and high school textbooks give to the voyages of Christopher Columbus, beginning in 1492, despite his customary designation as the discoverer of America, despite the incredible action of a Legislature and a governor here in the State of Minnesota—back in 1945, I'm told it was—making Columbus Day a legal holiday, the historians recognize Leif Erikson as the discoverer of America, in the year 1000.

Columbus was no more the discoverer of America than you or I. He never saw the North American mainland. He got to the island of San Salvador in 1492. He visited the South American mainland later. But as a discoverer, he was a full five hundred years late, as far as this continent is concerned.

Some seek to inject a religious note into arguments that may arise as to Christopher Columbus and Leif Erikson. Because the Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organization, one occasionally hears even some Scandinavians rather indignant about that church fostering the myth that Columbus discovered this country. Actually, the Catholic church has equal claim on Leif Erikson. He was the first Catholic missionary into the New World, having accepted the Christian faith at the court of King Olav Tryggvason, the

first Christian monarch of Norway, in the year 999.

Leif Erikson had two priests with him, intending to Christianize his pagan father, Erik the Red, and the rest of the inhabitants of Greenland, when he stumbled upon the North American mainland in the year 1000. Let us never forget that in the period of which



Valdimar Bjornson

we're speaking now, more than 900 years ago, when we say Christian, we might equally well say Catholic. For Christianity had no exponent in the world then other than the Catholic church. Students at St. Olaf College, or people interested in that institution, ought to be particularly aware of that fact—for that Lutheran institution is named for a Catholic saint.

At this point, some listeners may have begun to wonder by what stretch of the imagination this broadcast can be considered one dealing with an immigrant contribution to the "Making of America." That will, I hope, become more evident as the recital moves

along. I intend to discuss briefly the attempted Viking colonization of America—right here on our own mainland, and not merely in nearby Greenland—between the years 1003 and 1006. The Icelandic sagas contain the detailed record. They are the best sources as to the Viking voyages of discovery. For that matter, did it ever occur to any of you who stem from Norway that you would not know Norway's early history at all if it were not for the Icelandic sagas?

For purposes of this discussion, however, I would rather use other sources than the sagas—corroborative sources that show the record they preserve is more than a succession of boastful claims about long departed ancestors. The best such evidence both as to the discovery of America and the early attempt at its colonization is to be found in Catholic sources. In preparing this morning's broadcast, I have beside me a large, 826-page volume. It is the first in a 15-volume set, 'The Catholic Encyclopedia', bearing the subtitle, 'An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church.' It was published in New York in 1907, under the imprimatur of John M. Farley, then Archbishop of New York.

Take a look at it sometime, whether you happen to be Catholic or Protestant, and in doing so, look on page 416 of that first volume. The heading is: "America — Pre-Columbian Discovery of". And then follows, over seven pages of its finely printed text, one of the best and most authoritative brief treatments of Leif Erikson's discovery of America that has been printed in the English language. I'm going to give some excerpts from that first volume of the Catholic Encyclopedia, beginning as follows:

"Of all the alleged discoveries of America before the time of Columbus, only the bold voyages of exploration of the fearless Vikings to Greenland and the American mainland can be considered historically certain. Although there is an inherent probability for the fact of other pre-Columbian discoveries of America, all accounts of such discoveries (Phoenician, Irish, Welsh and Chinese) rest on testimony too vague or too unreliable to justify a serious defense of them. For the oldest written evidence of the discovery of Greenland and America by the Northmen, we are indebted to Adam, a canon of the Church of Bremen, who about 1067 went to Bremen, where he devoted himself very earnestly to the study of Norse history. Owing to the vigorous missionary activity of Archbishop Adelbert of Bremen (who died in 1072), this 'Rome of the North' offered the 'best field for such work, being the much frequented centre of the great northern missions, which were spread over Norway and Sweden, Iceland and Greenland.' Moreover, Adam of Bremen found a most trustworthy source of information in the Danish King, Sven Estrithson, who 'preserved in his memory, as though engraved, the entire history of the barbarians.' (He meant there the northern peoples.)

I am still quoting from this same section of the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Of the lands discovered by the Northmen in America, Adam mentions only Greenland and Vinland. The former he describes as an island in the northern ocean, about as far from Norway as Iceland (five to seven days), and he expressly states that envoys from Greenland and Iceland had come to Bremen to ask for preachers of the Gospel. The Archbishop granted their request, even giving the Greenlanders

assurances of a speedy visit in person. Adam's information concerning Vinland was no less trustworthy than his knowledge of Greenland. According to him, the land took its name from the excellent wild grapes that abounded there Adam's testimony is of the highest importance to us, not only as being the oldest written account of Norse discoveries in America, but also because it is entirely independent of Icelandic writings, and rests directly on Norse traditions which were at the time still recent. The second witness is Ari Thorgilsson (Ari the Learned, who died in 1148), the oldest and most trustworthy of all the historians of Iceland. Like Adam, Ari is conscientious in citing the sources of his information. His authority was his uncle, Thorkell Gellisson, who in turn was indebted for the details of the discovery and settlement of Greenland to a companion of the discoverer himself."

I now conclude this quoted excerpt from Volume I of the Catholic Encyclopedia. I could continue it far beyond the time allotted this broadcast. I shall summarize briefly what it says about the attempted colonization along our Atlantic seaboard. Erik the Red had laid the foundations for a colony that lasted several hundred years in Greenland, which he discovered

in 982. He was originally from the province of Jaederen in southern Norway, was outlawed for manslaughter, moved to the then thriving new republic of Iceland, was married there to a native of Iceland, settled on the farm to which he gave his own name, Eiriksstadir, in western Iceland, but unfortunately didn't change his habits with his change in residence.

He was finally outlawed from Iceland for using the sword "not wisely but too well", so he was actually in quest of "new worlds to conquer" when he stumbled upon the big area to which he gave the name of Greenland, in 982. He hoped to draw settlers through the attractive name. And he did. In the spring of 985, 14 shiploads of Settlers came from Iceland. There was continuous contact between Norway, Iceland and Greenland, during all these centuries. Leif Erikson grew up in Greenland, which at its height numbered a settlement of probably about 4,000 of Norse origin.

Catholic records show that the Greenland bishopric of Gardar had two monasteries and a convent of Benedictine nuns, the east and the west settlements being served by at least 11 churches. The introduction of Christianity there was the work of

(Continued on page 44)

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ÞJÓÐRÆKNISFÉLAG ÍSLENDINGA, Reykjavík, Iceland

Memorial Home At Mountain Dedicated

By HOLMFRIDUR DANIELSON

Sunday, October 23rd, witnessed an historic event at Mountain, North Dakota, when the Old People's Home, whose corner-stone was laid just over a year ago, was dedicated. It will henceforth be designated at "The Pioneer Memorial Home", and received the name of "Borg".

Visitors from Winnipeg and from all parts of North Dakota attended as well as several persons from Minnesota, including a member of a committee at Roseau planning to construct an old people's home in that town.

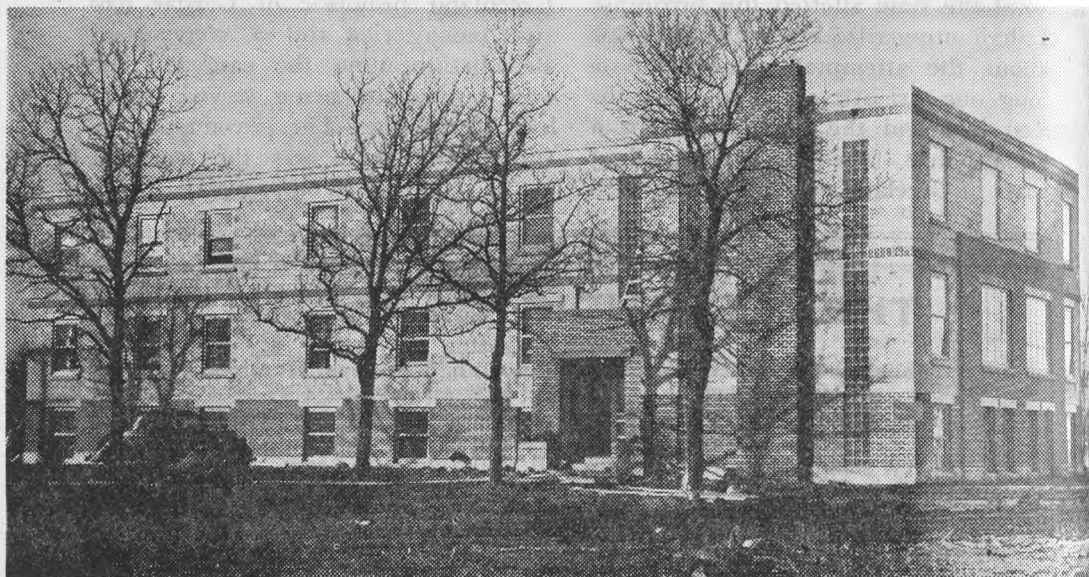
The Home, said to be the largest old people's home of its kind in the country, is situated on a hill overlooking a prosperous valley. It has 27 bedrooms, is 100 by 50 feet and was built at a cost of \$82,000. The project was supported by persons of Icelandic descent in all parts of the United States and Canada, many of the out-of-state supporters be-

ing native sons of the Mountain area.

The dedication ceremony took place in the large room which stretches across the east end of the two-storey building, and which will serve the Home as a combined lounge and dining room. Over two hundred persons had found seats in this cheery auditorium, while the overflow audience spilled into the hallways and the other rooms, a public address system giving them the benefit of the program.

The service was conducted in English by Rev. E. H. Fafnis, pastor of the parish, and the sermon delivered in Icelandic by Rev. H. Sigmar, D.D., Dr. and Mrs. Sigmar having come for this occasion from the West coast as special guests of the parish, which he had served for nineteen years prior to his going to Vancouver.

Victor Sturlaugson, secretary of the Building Committee, whose original



PIONEER MEMORIAL HOME "BORG"

membership has remained intact to this day, gave an address, outlining briefly the history of the project. A total of seventy-five meetings had been held by the committee, he said, since they first met, December 10th, 1944. .

In tribute to the outstanding loyalty and generosity of the whole community he said: "From the moment the spark was ignited in 1944, by a conversation between Dr. Sigmar and the late Dr. B. J. Brandson of Winnipeg, and Dr. Sigmar presented this hopeful dream to his parish, the committee and the community as a whole accepted the challenge, with the aim to carry the building of this Home through to a glorious finish. There have been many obstacles, yes! Labor has been short, materials have been short, funds to carry on the work, have on occasion, been short; but the people have never faltered!"

"Today", said Mr. Sturlaugson, "is symbolic of the project itself, it started dark and dreary after a week of heavy rains, but now the sun shines on us through these spacious windows, illuminating this grand edifice, which is a worthy memorial to our pioneers. With continued Divine guidance, and with the continued support of generous people everywhere, we hope to present this building to the aged ones at Christmas this year, free of debt!"

A gold watch was presented to F. M. Einarson, chairman of the committees, "who has had to carry the ball across the line for all the touchdowns," as Mr. Sturlaugson put it, and a corsage presented to Mrs. Einarson, who has so ably aided her husband in this work. Wholehearted tribute was paid to all the members of the committee. They are, beside the chairman and secretary: J. E. Peterson of Cavalier, treasurer; A. G. Magnusson of Milton, G. J. Jonasson of Mountain, Alvin Melsted of Gardar, Asmundur Benson of Bottineau,

Einar Einarson of Hallson, Rev. E. H. Fafnis, ex-officio member and Dr. H. Sigmar, who served on the committee until his departure from the district.

Warm tribute was also paid to Carl Hanson, building foreman, "whose master touch as a builder is evident throughout the whole building"; to Mrs. Olgeirson, the matron, and her assistants, Mrs. Olin Paulson and Bertha Asmundson; and to the forty or fifty women who, for the past two weeks, had worked steadily to put the home in order, setting up the furnishings, and giving the thousand-and-one touches which are so essential before a house can become a **Home!** Appreciation was voiced to the business firms of the surrounding towns, that have contributed so generously to the building project.

Greetings from the Government of Iceland were given by Dr. R. Beck, Icelandic vice-consul for N.D., who also delivered greetings and good wishes from Fred G. Aandahl, Governor of N.D., who was unable to be present. In his message, Governor Aandahl said, "This achievement reflects great credit, not only on this community, but on the State as a whole."

Supreme Court Justice, Mr. G. Grimson, gave a brief address, and congratulations and good wishes were read from: Rev. V. J. Eylands, pastor, First Lutheran church, Winnipeg; Wilhelm Kristjanson, Icelandic Canadian Club; Holmfridur Danielson, Editor, The Icelandic Canadian Magazine; Rev. P. M. Petursson, President, Icelandic National League; Rev. R. Marteinsson, Winnipeg; and Gunnar B. Bjornson, Minneapolis. Dr. Sigmar brought verbal greetings from his congregation at Vancouver and from G. Gislason, chairman of 'Höfn', the Old Folks' Home there. Messages accompanied by gen-

erous donations were received from several members of the community.

During the service, anthems were rendered by a mixed choir, directed by Theodore Thorleifson, and accompanied by Mrs. E. H. Fafnis; Mrs. W. K. Halldorson and Mrs. G. S. Goodman sang 'Lofgjord' by Sigfus Einarsson, and Rev. E. H. Sigmar of Glenboro, Man., sang 'Bless This House', accompanied by his mother, Mrs. H. Sigmar. He also brought greetings from his parish.

Following the dedication lunch was served by the combined Ladies' Aids of the parish. The visitors had an opportunity of looking through the building which accommodates forty-five people, including staff, and which is already well stocked with furniture and appliances, most of which have been given by individuals or societies in memory of departed pioneers. A card on the door of each room—which will later be replaced by a bronze plaque—gives the name of the donor and the name of the pioneer whose memory is being honored.

The smart functional furniture in the bedrooms, which is offset with colorful homespun-type coverlets on the twin beds, is of blond wood, as are all the doors and the woodwork throughout the Home. In the lounge the fluorescent lighting sheds a soft glow over the padded, blue, leatherette and

chrome dining chairs and the matching easy chairs. The light fixtures, the chairs and the asphalt-tile floor are gifts of the community in memory of Johannes Jonasson, a pioneer lay-doctor of the district. The piano is the gift the community of Milton and the floral decorations were a good-will gesture of four neighboring florists. The office furniture was given in memory of Freeman Einarson Jr., by his parents, the Library equipment in memory of Hon. Sveinbjorn Johnson, and living room furniture to honor the memory of Daniel Laxdal.

The laundry has been completely equipped by the Civic Club of Cavalier, and the Walhalla men donated the electric refrigerator and deep freezer.

The home and everything in it richly demonstrates what magnificent achievements may be accomplished by a people who put the full force of their energies behind an ideal! Our people have many times proved their preference for being builders for the future rather than mere on-lookers at life, and the Pioneer Memorial Home at Mountain is a striking example of how the Icelandic descendants here are still emulating the very best qualities of the pioneers they have now so fittingly honored. The name of the Home, 'Borg', means a city. And a city it will undoubtedly be, where its citizens will find contentment, peace and a measure of usefulness.

A Trip To Iceland

There is a plan under investigation whereby a forty passenger plane, from Iceland, would pick up tourists at Winnipeg and take them direct to Iceland for a thirty days' conducted tour to places of interest all around the country, and return to Winnipeg. This

would likely be in July. Anyone interested in taking this trip is requested to forward name and address to Mr. H. F. Danielson, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg, for information in the event that this plan may materialize.

Icelandic Poet, Author Honored

An honorary life membership in the Icelandic Canadian club was presented to Guttormur J. Guttormsson, noted Manitoba poet and dramatist, on his 71st birthday November 21, in the First Federated Church.

A program featuring the poet's works was given. Mrs. Elma Gislason and Elmer Nordal sang his 'Ljósálfar', set to music by Jón Fríðfinnsson. Mrs. Gislason sang 'Sandy Bar' and 'Haust-ljóð', both recently set to music by Sigurður Baldvinsson, of Reykjavík, Iceland. Mrs. Jona Matthíasson was accompanist. Ragnar Stefansson gave a dramatic reading of Guttormur's epic **Sandy Bar**.

In her address: **The Creative Artist**, Holmfríður Danielson pointed out that: "fortunately the time is past when we have to be told that Guttormur J. Guttormsson is an eminent poet, for he has been so widely acclaimed in Iceland for his outstanding contribution to Icelandic literature, and his works have been many times favorably reviewed in Eastern Canadian Literary magazines."

"You have heard to-night," she said, "a dramatic rendition of **Sandy Bar**, Guttormur's best known and most dearly loved poem. But we would miss much, if our pre-occupation with one great epic prevented us from going on to the full enjoyment of his other powerful and eloquent works. For instance, have you ever read right through '**Jón Austfirðingur**'? Have you followed the great vigor and fluid luxuriance of style in Guttormur's finest prosodic offerings, such as "**Ljóðmál**" and "**Sveitin mín**"? Maybe you have enjoyed his keen observations of life and his penetrating language in "**Bölvun**

Lögmálsins", or perhaps his wise delving into human emotions has crystallized your own experiences, longings and frustrations, as in '**Byflugnaræktin**'. Or have you been lifted up with him in delightful flights of fancy in such poems as '**Sólargaldur**' and awakened to the ecstatic appreciation of nature, by reading '**Ljósálfar**', which symbolizes how human life, fraught with misery and disappointments, as it often is, may be sublimated by close contact with the natural glories of God's world? You have of course laughed with him when his humor has been at its best, and you have perhaps, derived grim satisfaction from his moments of more sardonic humor often expressed in terse four-line epigrams, and directed against the tyrannies and the sham of society."

Mrs. Danielson illustrated her talk with many gems from the poet's treasure chest and concluded by giving a sensitive reading of: **Góða nótt**, prefaced by the remark that: "Guttormur's sympathy for all living creatures is evident in so many of his poems, but his tender solicitude for suffering and ship-wrecked humanity, who may not find anywhere the realization of their most cherished hopes, except in dreams, is nowhere more deeply epitomized than in this poem of haunting beauty and delicate sweetness".

Mrs. Guttormsson was presented with a corsage of roses by the vice president of the club, Mrs. G. Palmer, while the president, Wilhelm Kristjanson, presented to Mr. Guttormsson the hand-illuminated certificate of life membership. In thanking the club Mr. Guttormsson said: "I am particularly proud to accept this honor, as

the Icelandic Canadian club has never failed in anything!" He then went on to give one of his delightful sketches on pioneer history, liberally sprinkled with sparkling wit and apt humor.

Following the program a social hour was enjoyed in the lower auditorium

of the church, where the social committee, under the convenership of Mrs. Runa Jonasson, served a delightful lunch complete with Birthday cake. (For particulars on G. J. G. career see Icel. Can. Winter 1948).

Icelandic Canadian Club News

The annual meeting of the club was held at the home of Judge W. J. Lindal, June 28th.

The president, Axel Vopnfjord, reviewed the years work, and reports were given by all standing committees, showing a variety of activities enjoyed by members.

Reports showed that the Magazine has grown considerably, both in size and in popularity, and is in good standing, financially.

In February the club had pledged itself to donate \$1,000 to the establishment of a Chair in Icelandic at the U. of M., \$500 being paid to this project at the time, contributed from the Book Fund (Iceland's Thousand Years), and the Magazine Fund.

During the year two meetings were dedicated to Louise Gudmunds and Dr. Sig. J. Johannesson, respectively. Mrs. Gudmunds who was leaving to reside in Calif. was honored at the first fall meeting, when her compositions were sung by soloists, and the president gave an address thanking her for her valuable work in the club. At the May meeting, in the I. O. G. T. hall Dr. Johannesson was presented with a suitably framed hand-illuminated certificate of honorary life membership; his career was reviewed by W. Kristjansson and selections of his poems read by B. E. Johnson.

Officers elected at the meeting were: Mr. W. Kristjansson, president; Mr. A. Vopnfjord, past pres.; Mrs. G. Palmer, vice-pres.; Miss M. Halldorson, sec.; Miss V. Eyolfson, treas.. Executive committee: Dr. L. A. Sigurdson, Mr. Paul Bardal, Mrs. B. S. Benson, Miss L. Guttormson, Mr. H. J. Stefanson.

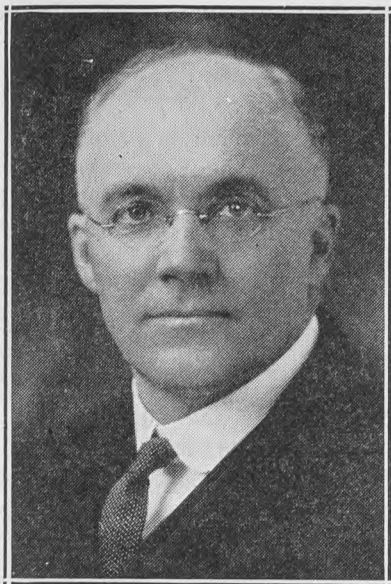
The Editorial Board of the Magazine: Mrs. H. F. Danielson, chairman; Judge W. J. Lindal, Mr. H. Thorgrimson, Mrs. H. J. Stefanson and J. K. Laxdal.

News section: Miss S. Eydal and Miss M. Petursson. War Effort: Miss M. Halldorson. Business manager, Mrs. Grace Thorsteinson. Circulation manager, Hjalmur F. Danielson.

Awarded Degree

The Institute of Chartered Life Underwriters of Canada has recently conferred the degree of Chartered Life Underwriter (C.L.U.) on Mr. Carl A. Hallson of this city. The three year course of study is conducted under the supervision of the University of Toronto. Mr. Hallson is a representative of The Great-West Life Assurance Co. in Canada. Mr. Hallson, born in Winnipeg, is the son of Mr. B. Hallson and the late Asta Hallson; he is active in social and community work and, is a past president of the Icelandic Canadian Club.

Appointed To Supreme Court



Judge Gudmundur Grimson

Climaxing a career of public service extending over forty years, came the announcement of the appointment of Judge Gudmundur Grimson of Rugby, North Dakota, to the Supreme Court of North Dakota. Judge Grimson first began the practice of law in Munich, North Dakota in 1906 upon graduating from the University of North Dakota Law School. He was editor and publisher of the Munich Herald for over three years until he removed to Langdon, N. D. in 1911, following his election to the office of State's Attorney of Cavalier County. Judge Grimson rose to national prominence through his prosecution of the celebrated Martin Tabert case in Florida in 1923, which resulted in the state of Florida abolishing its prisoner leasing system, and had a far-reaching effect upon penal administration throughout the United

States. In 1926 Mr. Grimson was appointed Judge of the Second Judicial District of North Dakota by Governor A. G. Sorlie, and has held that office until his recent appointment to the State Supreme Court.

His wife, the former Ina Viola Sanford, is also a graduate of the University of North Dakota. They have two sons, Keith, a physician and surgeon, and Lynn, engaged in the practice of law at Grafton, N. D. The Grimson family moved to Rugby in 1926. They now reside in Bismarck. Judge and Mrs. Grimson have both taken a prominent part in community affairs and have thus contributed in large measure to the social and cultural life of the communities in which they have lived. In 1939 the University of North Dakota conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Judge Grimson has always taken a keen interest in, and devoted much time to matters affecting the welfare of the Icelandic communities. In 1930 he was chosen as the official representative of the State of North Dakota to the Millennial Celebration in Iceland. On that occasion, the University of Iceland conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. In 1939 he was the recipient of Iceland's highest honor, that of Grand Knight Commander of the Order of the Falcon. At the annual convention of the Icelandic National League held in Winnipeg last February, he was made an honorary life member of that organization. In further recognition of his outstanding achievements, Judge and Mrs. Grimson were invited to Iceland last summer as guests of the Government.

Leif Erikson Statue Unveiled At St. Paul



A statue of Leif Erikson, a gift of the Leif Erikson Monument association to the people of Minnesota, was unveiled by Mrs. O. I. Brack, vice-president of the association, before an audience of over 3000 persons, Sunday, October 9th, at Minnesota's capitol grounds in St. Paul. The monument, sculptured in bronze by John K. Daniels, took fourteen years to complete. It is mounted on a square marble base, measures twelve feet in height, and weighs four thousand pounds. Mr. Valdimar K. Bjornson, St. Paul, vice-consul for Iceland was chairman of the proceedings.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Bjornson stated that this was a day dedicated to truth. The unveiling of the John K. Daniels' statue of Leif Erikson, he said, was one more concrete recognition of the validity of the Viking voyages of discovery in the year 1000, almost five centuries before Christopher Columbus' entry into this hemisphere. Evidence of this historical fact was to be found in the Catholic Encyclopedia, which states: "Of all the alleged discoveries of America before the time of Columbus, only the bold voyages of exploration of the fearless Vikings to Greenland and the American mainland can be considered historically certain". Other speakers at the ceremony included Governor Luther W. Youngdahl, who accepted the gift on behalf of the people of Minnesota from Dr. Eivind Klaveness, president of the Leif Erikson Monument association; Wilhelm Munthe Morgenstierne, Norwegian ambassador to the United States, and Jens C. Hauge, Norwegian Minister of Defense. At a reception which followed in the Christ Lutheran Church, Mr. Morgenstierne presented a 1,200 year old Viking sword to the Minneapolis Historical Society, a gift of the University of Oslo. The weapon, found in an old grave in Norway, bore the inscription "Nedmark", the ancient name for Norway.



Variety of spelling

On the new statue at St. Paul the discoverer's name is spelt **Leif Erikson**; the Calder statue in Reykjavik bears the ancient spelling of the name: **Leifr Eiricsson**! in Brooklyn it is designated as: **Leiv Eiriksson Square**.

WAR SERVICE RECORD



Gnr. Jon Edwin Kristjanson



Skuli Otto Kristjanson



Ac. Sgt. Kristjan Kristjanson

GNR. JON EDWIN KRISTJANSON—Born at Winnipegosis, Man., Nov. 13, 1919. Enlisted in R. C. Artillery June 28, 1941. Embarked overseas Feb. 1942. Served in United Kingdom, Sicily, Italy and Holland. Mentioned in despatches for distinguished service on Italian battle front. Returned to Canada July, 1945. Discharged Oct. 1945.

SKULI OTTO KRISTJANSON—Born at Winnipegosis, Man., Sept. 15, 1927. Served as air cadet in high school, served 2 weeks in Brandon, Man.

Ac./SGT. KRISTJAN KRISTJANSON—Born at Winnipegosis, Man., April 6, 1917. Enlisted in R.C.O.C. Nov. 27, 1942. Served in Port Arthur, Kingston, Ont., and Debert, N. S. Discharged August 7, 1944.

Sons of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kristjanson, Geraldton, Ont.



A.M.M. 2/c H. M. Davidson

In Memoriam



**A.M.M. 2/c HJALMAR MATTHIAS
DAVIDSON**

Born at Edinburg, N. Dak., May 29, 1917. Enlisted in U. S. Navy September 17, 1942. He received his boot training at San Diego. He attended school at Memphis, Tenn., for 6 months and catapult school in Philadelphia 3 months. In May 1942 he was assigned to U.S.S. Cabot as catapult operator. He entered the Pacific Theatre of War November 1943. He was killed in action November 25, 1944, by Japanese suicide plane. He was presented with the Silver Star medal posthumously.

Son of Magnus and Gudrun (Reykjalín)
Davidson, Edinburg, N. Dak.



SGT. INGVALD MATTHIASSEN—Born at Gardar, N. Dak., May 24, 1911. Enlisted in U.S. Army April 27, 1942. Served in Europe. Discharged Dec. 19, 1945. Son of Jon and Stefania Matthiasson, Gardar, N. Dak.



CAPT. MATHEW G. GESTSON—Born at Mountain, N. Dak., July 8, 1909. He served in the South Pacific. Awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Son of Mrs. Freda and the late Johann S. Gestson, San Francisco, Cal.



Sigm. 2/c R. W. Dall



Cpl. Harold Philip Dall

CPL. HAROLD PHILIP DALL—Born in Seattle, Wash., Oct. 7, 1923. Joined the U. S. Army March 7, 1943. He served in the European theatre of war. He was awarded a Battle Star and Victory medal. Discharged April 4, 1946.

SIGMN. 2/c ROBERT WILLIAM DALL—Born in Seattle, Wash., 1921. Joined the U.S. Army Oct. 31, 1942. He served in the Pacific Theatre. Awarded 8 battle stars, Good Conduct medal and Victory medal. Discharged Dec. 31, 1945.

Sons of Mr. Carl and Mrs. Phyllis Dall, Seattle, Wash.



P.F.C. KRISTINN M. JONASSON—Born at Mountain, N. Dak., Oct. 4, 1922. Served in Europe at Ardennes and the Rhineland. He was awarded the Victory Medal, American Theatre ribbon, European, African, Middle Eastern Theatre ribbon, W/3 bronze battle stars, one overseas service bar and Good Conduct medal. Discharged April 1944. Son of Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Jonasson, Mountain, N. D.



L./C. JOHANN SIGURDUR JOHNSON — Enlisted with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps July 11, 1940. Discharged June 1946. Served also in the First World War 1914 to 1918. Son of the late Björn and Gudrun Johnson, Mary Hill, Man.



L.A.C. EGGERT OLAFSON



Born in Álfatraðir, Dalasýsla, Iceland, August 12, 1906. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. May 3, 1943. Served with No. 2 C. & M. Unit, Winnipeg, Man. Posted to No. 9 C. & M. Unit, Vancouver, B. C., January 1945. Discharged March 12, 1946.



Son of Mrs. Sigríður and the late Ólafur Jónasson, Lundar, Man.

L.A.C. Eggert Olafson

Reykjalundur

New Rehabilitation Project in Iceland

By MARGARET STEPHENSEN

When I had the privilege of visiting Iceland this summer I knew that great changes had occurred there these last few years; that Iceland was going ahead with various improvements and experiencing a sort of 'renaissance' period, mainly a result of the narrowing of the world's horizons. Nevertheless, conditions there, as the picture was unfolded before me, evoked genuine admiration for the things this little country had accomplished. But the project that gripped both heart and mind was Reykjalundur, so much so that I procured data immediately that I might tell my people here about this work of mercy and rehabilitation.

The lines from Longfellow's poem: "A forlorn and shipwrecked brother seeing shall take heart again" was recalled to my mind when I visited and inspected the "Working home for discharged tubercular patients" at Reykjalundi, one half hours drive from Reykjavík. It lies in a wide valley under the shelter of a green hillside, where the steam rising from the hot springs, is visible. During the war this site had been one of the bases of the American Army, and when they left, the Quonset huts remained. They formed a sort of nucleus for this rehabilitation and vocational project which was started in 1940, but not put into operation until 1945, when five bungalows had been completed. Thus it began in a small way and has now reached almost grandiose proportions, because the main building, commenced in 1946, and now almost completed, is as ultra modern — in construction, lay-

out and heating, which is radiation in walls — as anything we have in this country.

At the time I was there in July, an expert from Sweden being conducted over the project, was much impressed and most enthusiastic. He said his country had, as yet, nothing comparable, but the Scandinavian countries have a similar federation and are working towards the same goal.

It was in 1938 that a "Federation of Icelandic Tubercular Patients" was formed and plans made for a practical financial programme whereby their dreams of a vocational home could come to realization. There are 110 trustees, in various parts of the country, who work faithfully and systematically at projects for raising money to finance the necessary costs, both of building and of operation. A portion of these costs have been met with grants from the government, the municipal and city councils, and are entirely voluntary. A great deal of money is raised by public subscriptions, memorial gifts, lotteries, sale of stamps and buttons and pamphlets to publicize the work.

Those eligible for admission to the home at Reykjalundi, are tubercular patients, who have been discharged from a sanatorium, but are not considered safe to mingle with society in the ordinary way. Then there was also the problem of earning a living, even in a small way, under the proper medical supervision. These are the reasons for the vocational project at Reykjalundi.

In 1944 the Federation purchased the old army site and plans for the build-

ings were drawn up by two architects, Gunnlaugur Halldorsson and Bárður Isleifsson.

★

Work. The essence of all charity is lifting up and lending a helping hand, so this project is planned to give work measured by the strength the discharged patient is able to expend, and is limited to three morning and three afternoon hours. But these six hours per day are the maximum any inmate is allowed to work and many are not permitted more than four hours — while the minimum is three hours. The pay follows the labor schedule, and in order to fulfil the ideal of self-supporting work, the home gets two hours of the daily work pay. The remainder is their own.

Home. As far as possible the ideal of a home has been preserved. There are white stucco bungalows, each containing: living room complete with easy chairs, book-case and radio; one double room for couples, and two single rooms. A tiny cubicle serves as a kitchen, mainly to make coffee, for all meals are served in a communal dining hall. A bath and store room complete the layout. At present eleven of these bungalows have been completed and occupied, but they plan to build altogether twenty-three, as materials become available. There are also four staff houses. The kitchen as yet, is located in a large Quonset hut, as are the various workshops.

But the main building, which I inspected and which is not quite completed — was a revelation. Like most buildings in Iceland, it is of cement construction, due to the lack of wood in the country. It is easier and cheaper to import the cement than lumber. The building is ultra modern, both inside and out, the inside being all finished

in a lovely rubber tile. The first floor contains lounge and reading room, dining hall and kitchen; also the clerical offices of administration, resident physician's office and nurses working quarters. On the second and third floors are the bedrooms, arranged in suites of one double and one single room with connecting bath, containing recess bathtub, two basins and shower. Thus there is a bath for every three inmates. The storerooms are in the basement. This beautiful building stands on a hill and is bright with large windows reflecting the sun's rays; one wall of the reading room and lounge being entirely of plate glass.

Workshops. These are as yet located in the old Quonset huts, or 'braggar' as they call them — and consist of wood-turning, mostly children's toys and school supplies, desks, etc.; a machine shop also supplying certain school needs as well as hotel and restaurant furniture, and a mattress factory, making divans and beds for hotels and private homes. There is a knitting department and a sewing room, operating much along the lines of our Institute for the Blind. Others do clerical work and still others keep the stockrooms in order. Everything produced here is thoroughly fumigated before being placed on sale. The day I was there, a woman of about eighty, I believe, was operating a power machine and hemming sheets, pillow cases and towels for use in the home.

As yet the surroundings are not attractive, the occupation has everywhere left its mark on the countryside in the form of scrap lying around. But the first concern of the directors of this project, is the buildings; they must be completed before beautification of the land commences. There are still twelve bungalows to be built as well as ten

workshops, which will replace the huts now in use. At present there are over forty inmates, later accommodation is planned for one hundred.

I cannot begin to describe the impact this project of self-help made on my mind and heart, and I could wish my pen were an abler one, so I could drive home to our people here, the importance of the work being done at Reykjalundi. Officially the name is: Vinnuheimilið að Reykjalundi", or 'Working Home', a name that connotes two fundamental attributes of society. — Work — the privilege of being able to work has always been a blessing to mankind — and 'home', man's most precious possession. As the name signifies, the place abounds in hot springs, and everywhere, as you look around,

the white steam rises from the ground saying to man: "Here is my heat, use it for your good". Then the ending: 'lundi', bespeaks a gentle valley at the foot of a hill — the ever-present blue mountains, with their green, mossy outcroppings encompassing it.

We used to have charity, often a bitter word to those, who had to accept its help, but now we have rehabilitation, and can feel that we have progressed. And whence came the impetus for the movement for rehabilitation of these humans — shipwrecked in health and unable to lead normal lives? Mayhap the story of the Good Samaritan will answer that query, and one will realize that the motivating influence is Christ and His teachings.

In The News

A Winnipeg radiologist, **Dr. E. T. Felsted**, who has specialized in research on radioactive isotopes for medical treatment and diagnosis, is in England where he will do further research at the Royal Cancer hospital of London.

A graduate of the University of Manitoba in medicine in 1942, he served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps during the war before returning to the university to spend one year doing medical research.

Awarded the Scientific Society prize and the university medal for physiological research he has also studied at Chalk River and in the Vancouver General Hospital, the Memorial Hospital, New York, and the University of California hospital.

Before returning to Canada, Dr. Felsted will visit medical centres on the continent. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Felsted, of Winnipeg.

Wins Scholarship Awards

Miss Heather Amundson, grade 11 student of Central Collegiate, Selkirk, Man., has won two scholarships for the year 1948-49. In addition to the Dr. Daniel Gordon Ross scholarship of \$100 awarded by the Lord Selkirk Chapter I.O.D.E., to the most outstanding student of the year, Miss Amundson has been chosen as this year's winner of the Manitoba Hotel-keepers' and Brewers Association scholarship amounting to \$350.00. Miss Amundson entered the University of Manitoba this term to specialize in Science. First winner of the Dr. Daniel Gordon Ross scholarship founded in 1944 was her brother Clifford Amundson, who is at present a medical student at the University.

Miss Amundson is the daughter of the late August and Stella Amundson of Selkirk, Man., formerly of Big Island, Manitoba.

Members' Corner

By Holmfridur Danielson



Mrs. Margaret Stephensen

Mrs. Margaret Stephensen returned to Winnipeg in September after a three-months' visit to Iceland, where she went as the guest of her late husband's nephew, Magnús Scheving Thorsteinsson and his wife Lára (Hafstein).

Born at Husavick, Man., where her parents, Stefan Gunnarsson and Anna Sigfusd., Hallson arrived in 1876, Margaret early became interested in Iceland. This interest was augmented after her marriage in 1896 to Dr. Olafur Stephensen who came from Iceland after doing post graduate work in Copenhagen, receiving his degree of M. D. and C. M., and who was the first Icelandic graduate doctor to serve the Icel. community in Winnipeg. Dr. Stephensen, who died in 1939, was a direct descendant of Olafur Stephensen, brother of Magnus Stephensen,

who was chief justice of Iceland from the abolition of Althing in 1800 until his death in 1833.

As the wife of this well known doctor the pretty, teen-aged bride soon became involved in the pleasant, though somewhat arduous, duties of playing hostess to various dignitaries who, from time to time, arrived from Iceland. When she was only twenty years old, and with a household and young daughter to care for, Mrs. Stephensen found herself entertaining Olafia Johannsdóttir, from Iceland, who was then travelling in the interests of the temperance movement. Her mission created quite a stir in Winnipeg, and an Icelandic branch of the W. C. T. U. was organized among the children, called "Hvíta Bandið". Margaret was active in the organizational work and took over the leadership of this group.

"I remember we used to gather the group around the piano and sing, — I played a little in those days, — and then we had games for them and little projects for them to work at. It was a busy time for me, as I also belonged to the Lutheran church choir and there were always lots of visitors." says Margaret.

Ever since, Mrs. Stephensen has lent her efficient aid and counsel to many church and community organizations and her quiet charm, dignity and good judgment has endeared her to all her co-workers. For twenty years she was secretary of the Lutheran church Ladies' Aid. "This was good for me", she says, "as it gave me a great deal of practice in writing Icelandic". Her secretarial work formed however only

a small portion of her services to the Aid; and if all the fancywork she has done for bazaars could be retrieved, it could occasion a mammoth sale, — and everyone would want to buy! From the time she was a little girl she has been indefatigable as a handicrafter and her daughters can proudly display the elegant crocheted bedspreads, cut-work luncheon cloths, doilies and table centres she has given them.

Margaret is now president of the L. A. and was among the nine members honored recently at a dinner for their service of fifty years of more to the Aid. For many years a member of the Jon Sigurdson chapter, I. O. D. E., she is also one of the outstanding workers in the Lutheran Women's League, having been for many years editor of their annual magazine, "Árdís". She is also member of the Icelandic Canadian Club, her ideas on the value of upholding Icelandic cultural efforts being thoroughly in accordance with its policies.

While in Iceland Mrs. Stephensen travelled widely, one of her most interesting trips being by boat from Reykjavík, and up along the east coast, with a party of 150 people. This was the official party escorting the Government's guests Dr. and Mrs. Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Justice and Mrs. G. Grimson, and stops were made at all the important ports, where there were festivities and banqueting. At Siglufjörður the guests were delightfully greeted on the bridge by a large community choir which came out full force to welcome them with singing in spite of a heavy drizzle of rain.

Since she came back, Margaret Stephensen, who is a very able writer and interesting speaker, has given a number of talks on her trip, and she wrote the fine article on "Reykjalund-

ur" specially for **The Icelandic Canadian**.



Congratulations to Paul Bardal, who was a successful candidate in the provincial elections, November 10, in the constituency of Winnipeg Centre, and won for the second time a seat in the Manitoba Legislature. He was a member of the Legislature from 1941 to 1945. Paul was also elected first vice-president of the Family Bureau at their annual meeting in November. (For further particulars on Paul, see *Icel. Can.* Spring 1949).



Miss Lilja Guttormsson, who for the last six years has been on the office staff of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, left for Ottawa Nov. 26. She will take a month's training in the department of external affairs before leaving for Oslo, Norway, where she will be on the staff of the Canadian Embassy. She will handle the translation of documents from Iceland as the Can. legation at Oslo also serves Iceland.

Lilja will be greatly missed by the members of the Club, as her cheerful presence and efficient work on all committees has been much appreciated. She served as club secretary three years and was an able teacher at the Icel. Can. Evening school for several years. She has also been a teacher at the First Lutheran Sunday school for a number of years and secretary for the Women's Lutheran League.

Lilja was born at Geysir, Man., her parents being the late Joseph Guttormsson and his wife Johanna (Jonasdóttir) now living at 498 Victor street. She has two brothers, Stefan, and Baldur, who was recently promoted to the rank of Lieut-Commander in the R. C. N.

We hope to receive some interesting notes from Lilja on her life in Norway.



Our **Caroline Gunnarson** had the good fortune of being sent as reporter and news editor, by her paper the *Shaunavon Standard*, to the annual convention of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association, at Jasper Park, Alta, Sept 12 — 15.

She is very happy in her work with **The Standard** and we hear that some of the Big City papers have reprinted excerpts from 'Caroline's Corner' which is very popular with readers.

After coming home to *Shaunavon Caroline*, although very busy on her own newspaper, found time to translate for us the charming piece **Childhood Christmas**.



Judge W. J. Lindal was appointed Winnipeg area chairman for the Canadian Citizenship Council national fund raising drive this fall. The Council is a national voluntary organization for co-ordinating the efforts of hundreds of agencies concerned with prob-

lems of citizenship. The objective of the campaign is \$50,000 and the area chairmen are making a personal approach for funds from those individuals and firms expected to take a lead in fostering ideals of Can. Citizenship.

This extra work should keep Judge Lindal busy, if he did not find his time fully occupied with his judicial duties, his frequent jaunts to the East and West Coasts, as chairman of the National Employment committee, his numerous trips all over the country in support of the Icelandic Chair endowment Fund, his work on the editorial board of the *Icelandic Canadian*, and innumerable other committees and clubs he serves so generously.



Our president **Wilhelm Kristjanson** has been elected president of the National club, a men's organization which regularly sponsors lectures on topics of general interest. — Will is still busily engaged finishing his *History of the Icelanders in Manitoba*.



New Members On The Magazine Staff

Miss Margret Petursson has joined the staff as news editor, proving the old adage: If you want to get fine co-operation be sure to ask a busy person for help! If Margret were not such a keen, efficient person she would simply be lost sight of in all the welter of clubs and committees she works on! The maximum of her energy for community work has always been faithfully given to the First Federated church where she is on the executive of the Ladies' Aid, the Evening Alliance, and the Alliance of Icelandic Liberal Christian Women.

She was also an active member of

the Dramatic society of the church while it was functioning, is a member of the University Women's club, and the hard-working secretary of the Founders' Committee of the Icelandic Chair at the U. of M.

Margret was graduated in Arts from the U. of M. in 1927 and has been for years employed as secretary with her two uncles Hannes and Olafur Petursson, at Union Loan and Investment Company. She is a daughter of the late Dr. Rognvaldur Petursson and his wife Holmfridur, with whom she lives at the big comfortable family residence at 45 Home St.

"I find little time now for any special recreation, but do get in quite a bit of reading", says Margret. But she has joyful memories of two delightful trips to Iceland. The first of these was at the age of fourteen when she had the exuberant experience of riding on horse-back all the way from Húsavík to Suður-Pingeyjarsýsla, where her mother's people lived. "In 1930 it was quite a family party that set sail for Iceland", she says. "Mother, father, three aunts, three brothers and myself." Then, with her parents and two of her brothers she continued on to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Scotland and England. It was all very gay and exciting, so now she gives her time cheerfully in serving all good community efforts!

Jon K. Laxdal has joined the Editorial Board of the Magazine and has already done considerable work in gathering material and writing for these last issues.

Jon was born in Iceland and came with his parents, Grimur and Sveinbjorg (Torfadóttir) Laxdal from Eyjafjörður, at the age of ten. They settled first at Leslie, Sask., where he got his public school education. Then he studied for two years at the U. of M. and by dint of hard work and perseverance finished his B. A. course at summer school and extra-murally, while at the same time teaching school. He was principal at Arborg and Gimli, and in 1947 was appointed Science Master at the Normal school in Winnipeg, where he now teaches mathematics. Last spring he received his degree in Education.

In 1934 Jon was married to Laura Isberg from Baldur, Man. They live at 39 Home St. and have three children: John 13, Joanne 11 and Shirley Maja 6.

"Hockey and baseball used to be my favorite sports", says Jon, but what with growing academic duties, a happy family circle and various community activities, he has eased up somewhat on strenuous sports, but indulges in golf and curling.

The Magazine staff heartily welcomes Margret and Jon to the ranks.

Contributions to Icelandic Chair Fund

One year ago the Icelandic Canadian club pedged itself to contribute \$1,000 to the Icelandic chair endowment fund, and half of that sum has already been subscribed. A number of our members have responded generously to this project, and others have given their assur-

ance that a contribution is forthcoming. The committee now appeals to all members and supporters of the club who wish, through the club, to be personally associated with this project, to please send in their contributions as soon as possible, to Mr. Paul Bardal, Ste. 4 Bardal Block, Winnipeg, Canada.

Larry Thor



Larry Thor

Versatility seems to be a hallmark of our Island Race. Now that there are no more unknown seas or shores to explore, some of the boys are turning to new fields. A case in point is the saga of Arnleifur Lawrence Thorsteinson, one time farmhand and bucksawyer of Northern Manitoba, but now special announcer and network supervisor of the CBS in Hollywood. He has come a long way already, and with only 33 years behind him he may be counted on to have a few places yet to go.

Our hero, who has streamlined his name to Larry Thor, was born at Lundar, Manitoba, from whence have come sundry other good things Icelandic. He is one of the four sons of Kristin Thorsteinson and the late G. O. "Mundi" Thorsteinson, school principal at various Manitoba points, veteran and delayed-action casualty of World War I. A slight physical disability prevented Arnleifur from fol-

lowing his dad's military tradition, though two of his brothers did, in World War II, (see next issue of this magazine).

Not having any chance at advanced education or training in the 'Hungry Thirties', Larry faced the necessity of making a living and making a worthwhile life the hard way; and he proceeded to do just that, on both counts. After following various nondescript vocations, that took him north even as far as Hudson Bay, he found himself giving his own weekly singing show over the new radio station CFAR at Flin Flon — for free! Then he became the entire writing staff, for the handsome stipend of \$70 a month. Now he makes more than that for a half-hour stint at the microphone.

His work at Flin Flon must have been found satisfactory, for it earned him a promotion, 3 years later, to CKGB in Timmins, Ontario, and a raise to \$108 a month! Next he moved on to Toronto's CKCF for a while, until he won an audition, over a strong field, as replacement for Christopher Ellis on a sponsored nightly newscast over CFCF Montreal. In this capacity he covered the Quebec Conference, where he frequently scooped the C.B.C. through a clever stratagem of his own.

But Larry always had a yen to be at the very heart and centre of broadcasting, which he now felt must be in Hollywood. So, six years and several thousand newscasts after he hit Montreal, he was off again, this time to the movie capital itself. Here he found himself in a highly competitive field, unknown and jobless, and with only such loose change as Canadian export

restrictions allowed him. Something, however, in the makeup of this young Icelandic Canadian caused him to swim rather than to sink in the Hollywood maelstrom. Soon he was announcing for a local 50,000 watt station.

About a year later the owner assigned to him some broadcasts that savoured strongly of racial and religious discrimination. This offended Larry's sense of fair play. He had a good job, but he left — only to move over to the Columbia Broadcasting System, as summer replacement. He's still there, but

no longer "replacement". His voice is now heard from ocean to ocean in his daily announcing. He it is who synchronizes regional networks as they join the national hook-up; and he doles out the seconds when the kilocycles are hit by such institutions as Amos 'n Andy, Jack Benny, the Lux Radio Theatre, even President Truman himself.

For Larry Thor and his wife — the former Leona Finnie of Winnipeg — and their three sons, it now looks like clear sailing with plenty of adventures ahead.

H. J. S.

Appointed to London



Mr. Edwin S. Johnson, chief of the local Canadian Press bureau, has been appointed to a similar post at London, England. Mr. Johnson, a charter member of the Winnipeg Press Club, began newspaper work in 1919 after service in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. He started with the Canadian Press in 1924 and since then has worked in New York, London and practically every Canadian Bureau. — Prior to his departure for England, Mr.

Johnson was honored at a farewell banquet by members of the Winnipeg Press Club at H.M.S. Chippawa, and presented with a gift.

Mr. Johnson was born in Reykjavík, Iceland. His parents were Egill Jónsson and his wife Sigurlaug Jóhannesdóttir from Eyjólfsstöðum in Vatnsdal, Húnavatnssýsla.

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Icelandic Writer in Arkansas

Mrs. Peyton Moncrief of De Witt, Arkansas, had two of her short verses included in the 1944 edition of *The Pageant of Poetry*, a collection of verse by contemporary poets, published in Los Angeles, Calif. The two offerings were entitled, 'Lonesome' and 'To a Rosebud'.

She was also awarded second place in one of eight groups of awards for a contest at the 1947 Annual Arkansas Writers' Conference. Her article was called, "One of the Rarest Antiques Comes to Arkansas".

Mrs. Arnetta Moncrief is a daughter of the late Vigfus and Margret Hanson, formerly of Gardar, North Dakota. She has four brothers: Dr. Alfred Hanson of New Jersey; Leo, in Minnesota; Kafon, in California, and T. L. Hanson of Gardar.

Heads Rexall Clubs



A. S. (Ed) Sigurdson

The July-August issue of the Rexall Magazine features the success story of A. S. (Ed) Sigurdson the Rexall druggist at Moorhead, Minnesota.

Mr. Sigurdson was born in Reykjavik, Iceland and emigrated with his parents at the age of 10 to North Dakota. Before becoming a druggist's apprentice at the age of 17 he had been a blacksmith's helper, a farm laborer and clerked in a general store.

In 1928 Mr. Sigurdson bought his present store which, by prudent management, his own good judgment and personal charm he has continuously expanded. At present he employs a sales and dispensing staff of twelve, all working on an employee participation plan, to handle his large volume of business.

One of the best yardsticks to measure a man's character and worth is the esteem in which he is held by his em-

ployees, associates, and friends, and the service he renders his community, fraternal and professional organizations. In addition to bringing up his family and expanding his business Mr. Sigurdson has found time to serve a long term as the head of the International Rexall Clubs. He is also a former president of both North Dakota and Minnesota Rexall Clubs and a former director of the United Wholesale druggists of Chicago. Besides his active professional leadership duties he has taken a prominent part in community affairs as a former president of the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, and the Moorhead Rotary Club. At the last joint meeting of the Rotary International held in Winnipeg last summer he was elected president of the Rotary International Fellowship.

Mr. Sigurdson's family consists of his wife Ruth, who was a nurse before her marriage, three children of their own: Mary Elizabeth, 10; Katherine Ann, 8; John Edward, 6; and Ralph Nilles, 2; a nephew of Mrs. Sigurdson's, adopted by the family.

In concluding his article in the Rexall magazine, the writer, Rus Walton, says: "The men of Minnesota and the great north Mid-west are planners, builders, men of vision, great men . . . Ed Sigurdson is one of the greatest."



Win by Acclamation

Two Icelandic members of the last Manitoba Legislature won their seats again at the November elections, by acclamation. They are: **Dr. S. O. Thompson** in Gimli constituency and **Chris Halldorson** in St. George.

NEWS

Honored by Iceland

Fridrik H. Fljoldal of Detroit, Mich., and **Kolbeinn Thordarson** of Seattle, Wash., have recently been decorated by the Icelandic government, being made Knights of the Order of the Falcon.

The presentation of the order was made to Mr. Thordarson by L. H. Thorlakson, Icelandic vice-consul in British Columbia, on the occasion of Mr. and Mrs. Thordarson's golden wedding anniversary in October. Mr. Thordarson has for the last seven years been Icelandic vice-consul in Seattle.

Mr. Fljoldal is a nationally known Labor leader having been, for many years, president of the Brotherhood of Railwaymen in the United States.

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Receives Appointment

Miss Bertha Kristjansson has been appointed to the staff of the Winnipeg General Hospital, Hematology department. After completing two years of pre-medical study at the University of Manitoba, Miss Kristjansson entered the Winnipeg General Hospital to train as a laboratory technician. This is an eighteen months' course conducted under the supervision of Dr. Daniel Nicholson, head of the Pathology department. Bertha passed her examinations with high standing in 1948 and was awarded the certificate of Registered Technician. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Fridrik Kristjansson, of this city.

★

Miss Joan Asgeirsson, third year Arts student at the University of Manitoba, was winner of the Sellers Scholarship, which is awarded each year for general proficiency to Arts and Science students of the University of Manitoba.

This scholarship is to the value of \$100.00. Joan is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Asgeirsson, 657 Lipton St., Winnipeg.

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At the Commencement exercises held at United College, in October, these students were among those winning scholarships and bursaries:

A. B. Baird Bursary, **Laura Evelyn Kristjanson**, fourth year, daughter of **Wilhelm Kristjanson**, 499 Camden Pl., Winnipeg.

The Baclean Bursary: **Margaret Sigvaldason**, third year, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. **A. Sigvaldason**, Riverton, Man.

The Women's Auxiliary scholarship: **Robert A. G. Erlendson**, second year, son of Mrs. **Magnus Erlendson**, East Kildonan, Man.

The Maclean scholarship: **S. Eggert Peterson**, first year, son of Mr. & Mrs. **S. Peterson**, Pine River, Man.

★

Receives Promotion

Lieut. Baldur F. Guttormson has been promoted to the rank of Lieut.-Commander in the R.C.N. and is stationed at Halifax where he is maintenance (El.) officer at the docks. He was transferred from Ottawa where he had been ass't director of electrical personnel. Prior to that he was at Esquimalt, B. C., and served for two years on the Canadian cruiser 'Uganda' when it was on its good-will training tour to various ports in South America, Mexico and Alaska.

Lieut.-Comm. Guttormson was married in 1944 to **Gertrude Wildsmith** of Halifax. They have one son, **Eric Stefan**. (For war service see I. C. March '46).

Music Scholarship Award

At the annual presentation of music prizes of the University of Manitoba School of Music, held at the Civic Auditorium October 22nd, **Miss Margaret Helen MacKeen** was awarded the Effie Dafoe scholarship in Music. She has previously won a number of awards for piano and organ. Margaret is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. W. MacKeen of 1012 Dominion St., Winnipeg, and is at present organist of the Greenwood United church. (Picture appeared in March '46 Icelandic Canadian).

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PALMI PALMASON JOINS STAFF OF BORNOFF SCHOOL

Palmi Palmason, well-known violinist, and member of the first violin section of the Winnipeg Symphony orchestra, has joined the Bornoff School of Music staff. Mr. Palmason will be associated with John Konrad, director of the school, in the teaching of advanced students.

Mr. Palmason brings a wide knowledge in solo and orchestral work to his newly assumed duties. He is a member of the Icelandic colony of Winnipeg, and was born at Winnipeg Beach.

He studied with John Waterhouse as did his noted sister, Pearl Palmason, of Toronto, who has appeared in recital at Town Hall, New York.

Mr. Palmason has been active in concert, symphony and radio work for many years. During the war, he served five years with the R. C. A. F. as wireless air gunner in various war sectors, including the Middle East. He was discharged from the air force in July of 1945.

Besides his work with the symphony, Mr. Palmason is a member of the CBC Concert orchestra. He lived in Tor-

onto three years and studied with Kathleen Parlow, and taught violin at the Hambourg Conservatory of Music. Following the war he studied in New York with Demetrius Dounis.

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Einar I. Siggeirsson, son of Siggeir and Gudrun Bjarnsson of Reykjavik, Iceland, received his Master of Science degree from the State College of Agriculture, Fargo, N. D. on June 6th of this year.

Einar has recently been made a member of the Phi Kappa Phi, an honor received only through attaining highest standing in his scholastic career. He has also been made member of the American Society of Argonomy and the American Society of Range Management.

Einar has now registered at the State College of Agriculture, N.Y., a department of Cornell University of Ithaca, N.Y., to study for his Ph.D. degree.

For further particulars see Icelandic Canadian, Autumn 1948.

Manitoba's Greatest Co-Operative

The Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, a small band of Lancashire weavers, opened their small co-operative store in December 1844 and set in motion one of the significant social-economic forces of modern times — the Co-operative Movement.

The co-operative idea of to-day is based largely on the theories advanced by the great English Social reformer Robert Owen (1771-1858). It has been defined as seeking to replace among rational and moral beings the struggle for existence by voluntary combinations for life. This idea therefore embodies both a theory of life and a system of business.

The Rochdale experiment succeeded beyond all expectations and soon there were hundreds of consumers co-op stores all over Great Britain and the continent — all based on the Rochdale plan. This plan was basically that of returning all profits to the members in proportion to their purchases.

The consumer co-ops as noted above originated in England but on the continent similar systems as applied to agricultural producers came into vogue. Denmark and Germany were the leaders in this field and in Denmark the co-operative movement always strongly marked by high moral idealism, may be said to have brought about the regeneration of rural life in that country. A feature of Danish co-operation is the stress placed on education as exemplified in the famous Folk Schools so widely copied elsewhere.

It is in the field of producers co-operatives that Canada and Western Canada in particular holds a unique position, and the Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd. is a giant

among the world's great co-operative enterprises.

The co-op movement in Western Canada dated from the opening up of the western plains, and has been chiefly concerned with the handling and marketing of grain. The Progressive party which swept the West in the early 20's and wielded a powerful influence at Ottawa in those days, was principally the party of co-operation, but the scope of this article precludes further mention of this interesting chapter in our history.

In Manitoba today by far the most important co-op enterprise is the Manitoba Pool Elevators (a member of the Canadian Wheat Producers Ltd.) an organization which in the economic sphere is concerned solely with the handling of grain. This organization is commemorating its 25th anniversary this year, and may be justly proud of its contribution to the economic and social welfare in rural Manitoba.

The M. P. E. of today has a membership of over 30,000 organized in 201 local associations. Its physical assets include 246 country elevators and 3 lakehead terminals valued together at 10 million dollars. Last year the organization handled over 30 million bushels of grain.

Bearing in mind the essential idealism of the co-op movement it is not surprising that the M.P.E. should constantly stress the social aspects of its work no less than the economic benefits accruing to its members. In the field of education the M.P.E. has made a significant contribution by its support of rural study groups, the maintenance of travelling libraries and the organization of youth clubs dedicated to the

furtherance of co-op objectives and rural improvement in general. On the cultural side its travelling art exhibits and educational films may be mentioned. To further the cause of public health, the M.P.E. has established a Hospital Memorial Fund which now stands at \$200,000. This fund pays the sum of \$3,000 towards the capital cost of new rural hospitals approved by the provincial department of Health and Public welfare, while grants from this fund have also been made to the Win-

nipeg Children's Hospital and the children's wing of the Brandon Hosp.

Having given a summary of the organization work, the Director's Report of the M.P.E. for the year 1947-48 ends on these words:

"Thus does the co-operative movement proclaim service, not gain, as the means for the attainment of the good life. It is the golden rule applied to social and economic activity and is a conception in accordance with the highest ideals of man." **H. Th.**

Lara Carlotta Gillis graduated from the University of Washington, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physical Education. Her parents are Jens and Kristjana Gisslasson of Seattle, Wash., formerly of Lundar, Man.



Visitors at Unveiling

Among the visitors at the unveiling of the Leif Erikson statue at St. Paul, Minn., were Grettir L. Johannson, Icelandic consul in Winnipeg, and Mrs. Johannson; Dr. Richard Beck, honorary vice-consul for Iceland in N. Dak.; and Fredrik Fljórdal from Detroit, Mich., who had been attending the convention of the American Federation of Labor at St. Paul.

The Icelandic Celebration has become famous! In its "Canadian Calendar", which is a list of interesting places for people to go to on their holidays, a well-known magazine published in Toronto, lists the Icelandic Celebration at Gimli along with such super attractions as the Calgary Stampede, The Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, the Miss Canada Contest, at Hamilton, and several other attractions for holidayers seeking entertainment.



Don't miss the **Icelandic Canadian Club Dance**, January 27, 1950. It promises to be a gala affair. Many have already asked for reservations. Get your tickets from club members or phone Mrs. G. Palmer, 36 145.

ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB

D - A - N - C - E

Blue Room, Marlborough Hotel — January 27, 1950

Jimmy Gowler's Orchestra — Modern and Old Time Dances

Admission \$1.50 per person

Dress Optional

For tickets contact any club member or phone Mrs. G. Palmer 36 145

"America In The Making"

(Continued from page 19)

Leif Erikson. He found America in the year 1000 on a voyage intended to take him from Nidaros, Norway's ancient capital, now Trondheim, to Brattahlid, his father's home in Greenland. He made three successive landings along our eastern seaboard.

MODERN MIGRATIONS BEGIN

It was in 1003 that Thorfinnur Karlsefni, a rich merchant from Iceland, having married a widow in Greenland, — Gudridur, whose first husband, Thorsteinn, a brother of Leif Erikson, had died, — organized an expedition to find the Vinland area which Leif had discovered three years before, and to settle there. A hundred and fifty of them left Greenland in 1003, getting to Vinland, which some say was in the region of what is Massachusetts now, but which others would place considerably further north. They passed up Helluland, where Leif's party had first landed — so named because of its rocky formation, likely in the northern reaches of Labrador, and also Markland, named for the woods which covered it — probably in the Newfoundland area. Icelandic annals indicate by a casual entry as recently as the late 14th century that the Markland region remained well known, and that periodic trips were made to it not only from Greenland but from Iceland as well, to secure needed timber from the forests.

The colony formed in Vinland was abandoned after three years because of hostile Indians. The first white child born in America, by the way, was Snorri, son of Thorfinnur Karlsefni and his wife, Gudridur. On leaving

this country's shores, some of those first colonists went back to Greenland, others to Iceland. Thorfinnur wound up in his native Iceland. He died there. His widow became a nun, later made a pilgrimage to Rome. Snorri, the first native white American, grew to manhood in Iceland, and a long line has descended from him there, justly proud of that ancestry.

It is tempting to keep on talking about this early history, recounting the fascinating events of almost a thousand years ago. I am sure that many of you would find it interesting reading. Sources are by no means lacking in the English language; I think that works in English dealing with the Viking voyagers of discovery and related topics now number close to 200, if not more. I haven't left you much in the way of specific contributions by these earliest immigrants to American shores — the group headed by Thorfinnur and Gudrid in the year 1003. Obviously, those contributions were not lasting ones because the colony was so short-lived. But a groundwork has been provided through establishment of these early links between Scandinavia and America, and in today's discussion we shall skip down the centuries to Icelandic migration westward, in modern times. I shall mention immigration to Canada only in passing, though Icelanders settled there in far larger numbers than they did here, south of the border. If there are today, as some estimate, 40,000 Icelanders and their descendants in North America, then certainly 30,000 of them are in Canada, and no more than 10,000 in the United States.

Reviewing the major migratory moves to this country in briefest recital, just to provide further background, one must begin today's discussion with the year 1856, when the first modern Icelanders came to the United States — a few converts to the Mormon religion, settling in Utah. The second and far more sizable group came to Washington Island, off the Door county peninsula in Wisconsin, in 1870. Next came the Minnesota colony, where I am born and brought up myself — in Lyon, Lincoln and Yellow Medicine counties, here in our own state, launched in 1875 — the same year as the major settlements in Winnipeg and north of there began. Finally, there is the largest Icelandic settlement in the United States — that in Pembina county, North Dakota, begun as an off-shoot from the New colony in Manitoba, in 1878. There is a newer colony at Seattle, Washington, with smaller ones elsewhere in the country.

I will not give too minute a chronological record here. But we may as well begin at the beginning in this mass movement of peoples which found Icelanders falling pretty much into step with other Europeans in giving the nineteenth century its dominant trend — that of large-scale migration from the old world to the new.

It is strange how coincidence often shapes history. It is because of the association of two Icelanders with some Danes that the Mormon colony in Utah had its beginnings. It is because of one Dane's association with some Icelanders that the Washington Island settlement in Wisconsin later came into being. And, as for my own home community at Minneota, its Icelandic settlement began solely because one Iclander and his family cast their lot

with Norwegians in Dane county, Wisconsin, and then moved with them by ox-drawn covered wagon to the banks of the Yellow Medicine river, when those Norwegians decided to press further westward, into Minnesota.

But I'm getting ahead of my story. It was in 1851 that two young Icelanders, from the Westmann Islands, Thorarinn Hafliðason and Guðmundur Guðmundsson, arrived in Copenhagen to go to a trade school, for training in skilled crafts. The year before, two "apostles" from the Salt Lake City settlement of Mormons in Utah had come to Denmark as evangelists for their faith. Their work, and that of others, bore fruit both in Denmark and in Sweden. Nearly 30,000 Scandinavians were converted to the Mormon religion, most of them moving to Utah. Of that number, about 15,000 were Danes. These two young Icelanders joined Danish friends in accepting the new faith, and the idea of moving far off to the westward to a new country caught their imaginations. These Icelanders, fired with something of the missionary's zeal themselves, were urged to go back to their homeland to convert more of their countrymen. They did so, confining their efforts mainly to their home district of the Westmann Islands, but getting over into the southern part of Iceland's mainland as well.

Thorarinn Hafliðason drowned in 1852, but his companion continued the mission work, joined later by a Dane. There is no point in prolonging that detailed recital. It should suffice to say that the first Icelanders — only a very few — got to Utah in 1856, a larger number joined them the following year, moving in along with Danes to found a settlement in and

near Spanish Fork, southeast of Salt Lake City.

Because of early hostility on the part of Lutherans toward the Mormon religion, which at this stage had polygamy as one of its tenets, Icelanders have seldom paid much attention to the Utah colony. It had no added recruits from 1857 until in 1874, with a few more coming between that time and 1892. I suppose that at its peak including Icelanders and their descendants, the colony has never numbered more than 200. But they were proud of their cultural heritage. They sought to maintain the traditions they had brought with them, while becoming excellent citizens of Utah.

One of their number, writing about the Spanish Fork settlement as it existed in the early nineties, says it was acknowledged there that the best carpenter in the village was an Icelander, so was the best blacksmith, the leading painter, the best stonemason, the finest watch-repairman — and the best handiwork was that of the Icelandic women. Descendants of this first modern Icelandic settlement in America have been particularly proud of their heritage, and have given that pride a more impressive tangible demonstration than has been in the case in any other such community — through the erection, ten years ago, of a pioneer memorial, taking the form of a miniature lighthouse, with appropriately inscribed plaque. As has been true in every Icelandic community in the United States and Canada, a very large proportion of the younger generation have gone on for advanced schooling, supplying more than their share of teachers and professional men.

I shall mention in only a sentence or two another migratory move by Icelanders, that had its origins in the

Thingeyjarsýsla of northern Iceland, in 1863. That's the year formal planning started. They had had a succession of hard winters and other difficulties. The Danish trade monopoly was a continuous source of discontent. And, believe it or not, one of these residents of Northern Iceland got the idea they ought to move to Greenland, of all places. He revived a sentimental harking back to history, in the days when Colonists left Iceland to settle Greenland, in the year 985 and thereafter. He was soon convinced by neighbors, however, that there would be no gain moving to a spot on the globe that is 97 per cent perpetually ice-coated, and a sharp shift in plans came when one of the farm leaders began to study possibilities in Brazil.

They engaged in serious study of the subject over a long period, and at the peak of discussion, no less than 500 had indicated their desire to move to Brazil. The plans encountered one difficulty after another. A Brazilian consul in Copenhagen was to be helpful. He failed to provide the promised help. What finally happened was that ten years later, in 1873, 34 Icelanders got to Brazil by going first to Copenhagen, then to Hamburg in Germany, and then to Rio de Janeiro. Only a few others joined the group later, in a section populated heavily by German settlers. So there are some descendants of these original Icelanders, speaking Portuguese, there in Brazil, still today.

The migration that really "broke the ice" and started the westward flood was in 1870. And there comes the coincidental link with a Dane, which I mentioned a while back. His name was William Wickmann and he came to Iceland in 1855, going to work for Gudmundur Thorgrimsen, "faktor", an Icelander, who operated the Danish

trade monopoly's big mercantile establishment at Eyrarbakki, in southern Iceland. Gudmundur Thorgrimsen, by the way, was the father of the late Rev. Hans Thorgrimsen, who served the Norwegian Lutheran Synod for so long, lived for so many years in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and died not many years ago at the advanced age of more than 85.

This man Wickmann left Iceland for the United States in 1865, going first to Milwaukee. He went from there to Washington Island, off the tip of Wisconsin's Door county peninsula, an island about six miles square, out in Lake Michigan. Wickmann wrote numerous letters to his former employer, Thorgrimsen, back in Eyrarbakki in Iceland. He was lavish in his praise of the new home he had found. In the visiting that naturally proceeded as residents of that area came to the store, there was much talk of America and of the success apparently attending location there on the part of this man they had all known so well. The result was that some others who worked for Thorgrimsen, and a few of their neighbors too, set out for America in 1870, heading first for Milwaukee and locating then on Washington Island, in a settlement predominantly Norwegian.

Descendants of those first settlers, always a small colony, still live on Washington Island, where they have earned a livelihood mainly through fishing operations, retaining that close similarity to circumstances in their old homeland.

In 1872, Hans Thorgrimsen joined the Milwaukee group. That same year a first cousin of his, Pall Thorlaksson, arrived. They both became ministers, joining Norwegians who went in those days to the Missouri Synod institution

at St. Louis for their theological work. Pall Thorlaksson became an important figure as to later Icelandic immigration, and was also father of the North Dakota settlement in Pembina county. He died a great many years ago in North Dakota, but his brother, Niels Steingrímur Thorlaksson, who also became a pastor, taking his theological work in Christiania, Norway, died only a few years ago, about 85 years of age. He was the first permanent pastor of the Icelandic settlement at Minneota, coming there in 1887, served Norwegian congregations at Park River, North Dakota for some years after that, and spent the longest period of his active pastorate at Selkirk, Manitoba.

Milwaukee became the centre to which Icelanders arriving in the United States headed. A fairly sizable number arrived there late in 1873. Some of them were aided in finding temporary homes by the Norwegians in Dane county. Some founded a small Icelandic settlement that lasted only a short time, near Shawano, in Northeastern Wisconsin.

It is from the Dane county group that the Minnesota settlement stems. And there comes the last of the three coincidences to which I referred some time back. One of those Icelanders given shelter and a helping hand by Norwegian pioneers in Dane county in 1873 was Gunnlaugur Pjetursson (Peterson is the Anglicized form) from Hakonarstadir in Jokuldal, in Northeastern Iceland. It was because Norwegian neighbors of his — particularly the Hovdesven family — decided to move on to Minnesota in 1875, that Gunnlaugur and his wife and a few relatives with them chose to follow the same course. And thus he became the first Icelandic settler in the state of

Minnesota, taking a homestead in what became Westerheim township in Lyon county, seven miles northeast of Minneota, on the 4th of July in 1875.

EVALUTATING THE CONTRIBUTION

Gunnlaugur's party left with Norwegians who were pressing westward from Dane county in the summer of 1875, and their overland journey by ox-drawn covered wagon, lasting many weeks, did not end till they reached the banks of the Yellow Medicine River, seven miles northeast of the village in which I was born — Minneota, in Lyon county. It was on the 4th of July, 1875, that Gunnlaugur Pjeturs-son took his homestead there, naming the farm Hakonarstadir, the name borne by his ancestral home in the Jokuldal of northeastern Iceland. When operated in later years by his son-in-law and daughter, Halldor Josephson and Elizabeth Nicholson, it was known as Riverside Farm, and is frequently referred to by that name still.

I must not be carried away by the impulse to reminisce about the "good old days" in a community that will always be home. Just a few more facts for the historical record, and then my final assignment in this series must begin. And, by the way, that assignment was described for me in a letter from Dean Thompson about this broadcast. "I think it would be fine", he said, "if in your concluding lecture you would mention something about the Icelandic group's interest in politics and government, art and literature, as well as education, church, editorial work, business, and so on."

That ought to fill the remaining time. But just to get the migratory moves in proper relationship, let me

recall one or two historic facts first. At the same time as Milwaukee was becoming something of a base of operations for Icelanders in the United States between 1870 and 1874, migration to Canada was beginning. First settlements, in 1873, were in Nova Scotia and Ontario. The small group in Milwaukee had been canvassing possibilities for a larger settlement on this side of the line. A group went to Nebraska in quest of land, and a few families did settle there. In addition to the Washington Island colony, there was a settlement in Shawano county, Wisconsin, for a few years, transferred almost bodily to North Dakota in 1878, except for a few who had in the meantime gone from there to Minneota community.

While 1875 marked the beginning of Icelandic settlement in Minnesota, it also saw the launching of the largest colony of Icelanders on this side of the Atlantic, the New Iceland settlement along the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, north of the city of Winnipeg in Manitoba. That colony began when some of the Ontario settlers were persuaded to move further westward. They came down the lakes to Duluth, across Minnesota by rail to Fisher's landing on the Red River, south of where Grand Forks stands now, and then by flat-bottomed boat northward along the Red River to Winnipeg. The New Iceland colony was encouraged and strengthened by the man who was then Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, whose book, "Letters from High Latitudes" showed the friendly interest he had developed in Iceland and Icelanders on his visit there in 1856. As part of Canada's effort to attract settlers to the western provinces, Lord Dufferin made concessions scarcely paralleled in immi-

gration history. He gave these Icelanders what amounted almost to autonomy over an area more than 40 miles long and 11 miles wide along Lake Winnipeg, and in it they could establish local government and follow forms and customs exactly as they had known them in Iceland.

I mention the New Iceland colony to this somewhat detailed extent because it became the "mother colony" of the largest Icelandic settlement in the United States, the one which began forming in Pembina county, North Dakota, in 1878. The Argyle settlement near Glenboro and Cypress River, about a hundred miles west of Winnipeg, was also formed that same year as an off-shoot of the original New Iceland colony. Difficulties were indescribable the first two or three years in New Iceland. Immigrants and their families died like flies in a small pox epidemic that raged for a whole winter. Brush had to be cleared, sloughs drained, trees felled, shelter of some sort provided — the one gift of an otherwise grudging nature being actually Lake Winnipeg itself, where fishing operations have provided the main sustenance for the settlers all these years.

Minute details as to these settlements will have to be glossed over now in a necessary approach to the larger though certainly vaguer task of attempted evaluation. It was because an Icelanders threw his lot with some Dane county Norwegians that the Minnesota settlement came into being 74 years ago last summer. Gunnlaugur Pjetursson was joined in the next year or two by more of his former neighbors who had spent a while in Wisconsin — Sigmundur Jonatansson, father of J. H. Jonathan at Minneota; Magnus Gislason, father of the late

C. M. Gislason, lawyer and member of the state legislature from Lincoln county, who died in Minneapolis only a few years ago, after having served on the State Board of Grain Appeals for some time; and Loftur Jonasson, father of Mrs. F. C. Zeuthen, a former Minneotan now living in Minneapolis, and of the well known contractor, formerly at Aberdeen, South Dakota, S. W. Jonason.

Soon there were arrivals in Minneota direct from Iceland, my grandmother, Kristin Benjaminsdottir, and my father, Gunnar Bjornson, among them, in 1876. My dad wasn't quite four years old at the time. The largest single group to come to Minneota from Iceland arrived in the summer of 1879 — 70 years ago this summer. Practically every one of them came from the Vopnafjordur area in north-eastern Iceland. There were about 160 in that group, prominent among them being Bjorn Gislason, who settled just across the river from the original pioneer, Gunlaugur Pjetursson, on land that Eirikur Bergmann had homesteaded, but sold on moving to North Dakota.

There were a few families from the Minneota community who moved to the North Dakota settlement after it was started, in 1878 — the three best known have left a lasting imprint in the record of contributions made by Icelandic immigrants both in this country and Canada — Eirikur Bergmann, Kristinn Olafsson and Jon Brandsson. Hjalmar Bergmann, son of the first named, became a renowned lawyer in Winnipeg, after leaving his North Dakota home; he died there in 1948, a member then of Manitoba's supreme court. Rev. K. K. Olafsson, son of Kristinn Olafsson, born in Pembina county shortly after his par-

ents left the Minneota community, graduated from Luther College, became president of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod, and is now serving a ULC congregation in a Chicago suburb. Dr. B. J. Brandsson, Jon Brandsson's son, practised medicine in Winnipeg for years, going there from North Dakota; he was just a boy when he came from Iceland with his parents to the Minneota community, and when he died in Winnipeg a few years ago he was one of the best known surgeons in Canada, and had long taught medicine at the University of Manitoba, in addition to his practice.

But I digress to interrelations between the Minneota, the North Dakota and the Winnipeg settlements, from first mention of Bjorn Gislason. Perhaps the mention of specific names should have been avoided in this section of the broadcast. Yet to cover several phases of our attempted evaluation of contributions by Icelandic immigrants, mention of the Gislason family serves as one of the better examples. The pioneering father, who died on his farm northeast of Minneota in 1904 brought a sizable family with him from Iceland, all of whom have brought distinction to their own small national group. Walter was for years in the hardware business in Minneota, was postmaster for a considerable period too; Thorvaldur was his real name. He died in the spring of 1949. Bjorn, who died in Marshall some 15 years ago, was an attorney of widely recognized ability, active as a real estate man, prominent in Democratic politics; his son, Sidney, practices law in New Ulm now. John is still operating the old home farm in West-erheim, but he served Lyon county for ten years in the state legislature, with real distinction. Halldor died in 1947

in Minneapolis; he had been a professor of speech, director of the University's radio station, head of its extension division's community service department, in a career extending over more than 30 years on the faculty of the University of Minnesota. Arni is the youngest — a lawyer in partnership with his brother, Bjorn, at Minneota for years, and now for more than 20 years one of Minnesota's best jurists, as district judge of the Ninth judicial district, living at New Ulm.

Dean Thompson's letter to me says: "I am very sincere in suggesting that you should mention some of the contributions your father has made to the state of Minnesota." That would be taking unfair advantage of listeners, but a point or two could be mentioned, solely for illustrative purposes. The illustration has numerous parallels. It was in the school of pioneering hard knocks that my father received most of his education. Tending Minneota's town herd as a boy in the days when almost every villager kept a cow, working on farms among the Norwegians who surrounded us and learning the valdris dialect he has never forgotten, clerking in a store, reading law for two years in C. M. Gislason's law office in Minneota, Gunnar Bjornson entered newspaper work first as part owner of the Minneota Mascot in 1895, became its sole editor and publisher in 1900, selling what had become a family institution 44 years later, after having raised a number of printers and editors in the persons of his sons, who just about grew up in that printshop. He served in the state legislature in 1913 and 1915, was chairman of the Republican state central committee in 1914, moved to the Twin Cities in 1925 on his appointment to the old State Tax Commission, and has been on the State

Board of Tax Appeals since its creation in 1939. He and his wife, born in Iceland too, but reared in settlements in Saskatchewan and Winnipeg, will leave their six children no legacy of material riches. But the heritage they are passing on is typical, I feel, of the Icelandic immigrant contribution — something of a passion for learning, a questful desire for education, in an out of school, a love of good books, and of poetry, an interest in civic affairs, an abiding regard for the best attributes of the Icelandic heritage, both as to its inspiring history and its brilliant literature, ancient and modern, and for the beautiful language which means so much in conveying that heritage.

Coupled with those qualities, I think the Icelanders have maintained in this country an admirable breadth of view, a fundamental tolerance. They are argumentative, here as in the old country. They enjoy spirited discussion and differ sharply, often over trifles. But they respect the other fellow's right to his opinions. In religious matters, it may be said that most of them are tolerant to a fault. I think that everyone of Icelandic ancestry in this country can join me in regarding these attributes as features of the heritage which immigrant forebears have given us.

Specifically, the Icelandic community at Minneota has provided far more than its proportionate share of

teachers, at grade school, high school and college levels. There has been particular loyalty to our system of free public education among Icelanders. Those going beyond high school have, in the main, attended state normal schools or the state university.

The most famous names among Icelanders in the United States come from the North Dakota settlement — Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the world renowned Arctic explorer, born at Arnes in the New Iceland settlement in Manitoba, but reared in Pembina county, and Hjortur Thordarson, six years old when he left Iceland in 1873, losing his father, Thordur Arnason, three months after arrival in Milwaukee, going with his widowed mother and the rest of the family to North Dakota, reared in poverty there, finally founding the Thordarson Electric Co. in Chicago. He was an inventor of unusual brilliance and one of the nation's largest manufacturers of transformers; he died in Chicago in 1945.

Unfortunately my "bill of particulars" must end too abruptly. But the Icelanders, small in number both in this country and in their homeland, have clung tenaciously to an inordinate pride in their nationality, as is so frequently the case with small nations. Their stubborn individuality, their true love of and respect for learning, and their genuine interest in civic affairs are worthy contributions to "America in the Making."

(The Icelandic Canadian has from time to time featured in its pages, many noted men from the various Icelandic communities of the United States, thus giving its readers the opportunity of becoming acquainted with their contributions to their respective communities and the country at large.—Ed.)

Walters' Painting Sent To Scotland

Emile Walters' Painting to be hung among one of the World's Great Art Collections

In the Summer issue of the Icelandic Canadian there were reproduced three striking works by Emile Walters. One of these was the Icelandic painting, *The Harp of the Valkyries*. It sometimes happens that a reproduction in black and white does less than justice to the original, especially if the work depends, for its appeal, more upon its color than upon form and grouping, but its must have struck those who saw the reproduction of the *Harp of the Valkyries* in the Icelandic Canadian that the work had an almost startling intensity, even if the colors of the original (which are quite extraordinary) had to be guessed at. The gauntness of the terrifyingly impending crags, limned with eerie faithfulness to Nature's model, is perhaps even more bleakly arresting in the black and white reproduction than in the original picture, where the strange Northern coloring, while in no way taking away from the uncompromising nature of the subject, renders the whole presentment more merciful to the eye and to the mind.

Shortly after the appearance of the reproduction in the Icelandic Canadian the original picture was acquired by a connoisseur of Scottish birth, who, not without a few qualms over the prospect of the departure of the work from North America, probably for ever, conceived the idea of requesting the acceptance of the picture by the Art Galleries of the City of Glasgow for their collection. The owner of the picture was impelled to the decision to make the gift of this master-

piece to the public galleries of his native town by several considerations. Perhaps not the least of these lay in the gratitude he felt towards the Glasgow Galleries, which rank high among the world's great art collections, for golden hours of youth spent there in absorbing the beauties of Rembrandt, Botticelli, and Corot, together with a host of others, the benefactors of the world. To have seen and to have been lost in wonder at "The Man in Armour" of Rembrandt, where, by the interposition of a point of bronze or of gold, the old Master transforms with magical alchemy a billowing mass of darkness into something glowing and alive — to have been allowed to look one's fill upon this was to have incurred a debt. To have fallen in youthful love with the "Pastorale" of Corot — his "Souvenir d'Italie" — and almost to have persuaded one's self of the glimpse of nymphs and fauns among the ineffably lovely trees and foliage was surely to have shed a little of the materialism of this Iron Age and to have gained some enrichment of soul. It needs not to be a sentimentalist to regard such considerations as cogent. they seemed so at least to the owner of the *Harp of the Valkyries*.

From Dr. Honeyman, Director of the Glasgow Art Galleries, it was learned that there was no representation there of the work of an Icelander or one of Icelandic descent, which is a little surprising, as Scotland has always had a soft side for Iceland — both countries came within the region of the Thule of the ancients and there

are many blood ties between them. It seems good, therefore, if the hiatus were to be filled, that such an outstanding work as *The Harp of the Valkyries* should find a place in the Scottish Gallery, whose halls, largely through the devoted generosity of Glasgow's own citizens, are hung with so many of the world's masterpieces.

The gift was duly considered and accepted by the Corporation of the City of Glasgow, and the picture is now in the Galleries awaiting the completion of arrangements for its proper exhibition. Its former owner, unashamed of what might be considered maudlin romanticism, felt that the prosaic mode of transportation by steamer to its destination was inappropriate to a picture bearing such a name as *The Harp of the Valkyries*! The Valkyries themselves, those divine maidens who swept through the air to do the bidding of Odin, would have disdained the slow progress, through languid waters, of their sister Nereids, and it seemed fitting that their Harp, too, should wing its way through the air to Caledonia, Stern and Wild! Fifteen hours after leaving the shores of North America by plane it was delivered to its new custodians. Who knows? . . . Perhaps the Valkyries watched over its flight!

An aphorism by one of America's most distinguished College Deans may be paraphrased: "A classic is a work of art that is contemporary to any age." Most of the works already in the Art Galleries of Glasgow are classics. Emile Walters' *Harp of the Valkyries* now takes its place among them. It is permissible (as it is pleasant) to hope that among the Scottish lads and lassies who will, in coming years, spend some golden hours among the treasures of art in their native city, there will be

those who, after receiving the spiritual message communicated to them by Rembrandt, Titian, and Corot, will turn with equal delight to this picture of the cold and beautiful North.

R. H.

Gift For Forestation In Iceland

Soffanias Thorkelsson, for many years owner and operator of Thorkelsson's Box Factory in Winnipeg, has donated the generous sum of fifty thousand **krónur** for forestation purposes in his native district of 'Svarfaðardal' in Iceland. Suitable land has been donated for the project by Þorleifur Bergson and his wife Dorothea Gísladóttir, at **Hofsá**, and the work has already commenced. Mr. Thorkelsson wishes the project to include also a plant nursery, for the convenience of those landowners in the district who wish to start growing trees and shrubs on their own property.

Mr. Thorkelsson has in the past shown great loyalty to his home district in Iceland which he left at the age of nineteen. Two years ago he donated a fine church bell to 'Vallakirkja', in Svarfaðardal, the church where he was confirmed.

In 1940 he visited Iceland, spending more than a year in the country and on his return published a two-volume work on his trip, which he called **Ferða-hugleiðingar**.

Mr. Thorkelsson is now retired, his sons having taken over the management of the plant, now known as Thorkelsson's Wood Wool Insulation. Mr. Thorkelsson's second wife was formerly Miss Sigrun Johnson of Winnipeg. They were married last October and live at their new home, 100 Uganda Ave., Victoria, B. C.

Welfare Benefits In Canadian Industry

A concerted drive is under way in the United States on the part of labor unions to secure pensions, sick pay and other welfare benefits from employers.

In view of the amount of discussion this campaign by a section of U.S. labor has raised, it is interesting to learn what is being done in this field by Canadian industry.

Within the past few weeks the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has completed a survey of 1,309 firms in the ten provinces across the Dominion. These firms, all employing ten or more persons, provide a good cross section of Canadian industry. The 1,309 companies 579 of which are non-manufacturing firms, employ among them 800,000 men and women.

These firms were asked to report on what they were doing in the way of social benefits for their employees. The reports received by the Chamber show in unmistakable fashion, that by and large Canadian industry has come to appreciate the value of providing social benefits for employees which lend to the employee a sense of security and of protection against misfortune and old age.

For example 80 per cent of all the companies surveyed reported that they had a group insurance plan for employees; in the great majority of cases the plans were contributory, that is contributions were made by both employers and employees.

Fifty per cent had a pension plan for workers. Among companies having 10 to 99 employees, 38 per cent had pension schemes. In the case of firms having 5,000 or more employees, 93 per cent had schemes to take care of workers after their retirement.

Benefits for employees in the event of absence from work due to illness were reported by 75.5 per cent of the firms surveyed. Group hospitalization schemes existed in 1,122 of the 1,309 companies.

Of the 730 manufacturing concerns surveyed, 36 per cent reported that they operated lunch rooms for their employees. Of these 34½ per cent provided food to workers at cost and 37 per cent supplied food below cost.

It is estimated that some companies spend between 10 and 15 cents an hour per employee on the above and other social welfare benefits for their employees. Clearly these welfare benefits are assuming an important place in the wage bill of Canadian industry.

Unfortunately while free enterprise is providing these benefits on an ever-increasing scale remarkably little effort is being made by many firms to keep even their own employees informed as to what they are doing in this field. Radicals and enemies of the free enterprise system have taken advantage of this negligence to create an impression that these benefits are something peculiar to socialistic philosophies.

Only 27 per cent of the firms surveyed were able to report that they had even a handbook outlining welfare benefits for distribution to employees. Comparatively few had house publications which were circulated among workers and fewer still had personal contacts between management and employees. Small wonder that workers generally are not familiar with what social benefits go with their jobs or the efforts of their firms to expand them.

Canadian industry seems so far to have done a creditable job in the field

of social welfare benefits for employees. But it seems to be doing a poor public relations job in failing to capitalize on the large amounts being spent on pensions, group insurance, hospitalization and health measures and neglecting to make these programs known to their employees and the public.

—Winnipeg Tribune.

Dr. Grimson Finds Drug For Ulcers

After three years of experimenting Dr. Keith S. Grimson may have succeeded in finding a drug (called Banthine) for relief of ulcers.

Dr. Grimson is a son of Mr. Justice Gudmundur Grimson and Mrs. Grimson of Bismarck, N. D., and is professor of surgery at Duke university.

While helping innumerable peptic ulcer sufferers, through complicated operations, Dr. Grimson and his associates, continued their research into methods which would avoid the use of surgery. Through this research has been developed a new synthetic drug, called banthine, which they had been testing on high blood pressure. The drug, taken by mouth in tablet form, slows down the stomach contractions and reduces the flow of corrosive acid, and patients taking the treatment have not only been relieved of pain, but X-rays have shown that their ulcers had healed.

After several months of further testing the drug, Dr. Grimson hopes to have it approved for general use.

Featured in the 'Lesbók'

We have received a copy of the 'Lesbók Morgunblaðsins' which features prominently an account of the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the 'Is-

lendingadagur' at Gimli, August 7, taken from the Icelandic Canadian, Autumn issue. There is also a picture of the 'Fjallkona', Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson, together with the full text of her address given at the celebration.

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